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## LAFCADIO HEARN'S *CHITA*

EDWARD STOKES

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Although Lafcadio Hearn was never an American citizen—he exchanged British for Japanese citizenship in 1896, eight years before his death—the work of this civilized nomad of mixed Irish and Greek blood undoubtedly belongs to American literature. After arriving in New York as a penniless exile of nineteen, he spent over twenty years (1869-1890) in the United States. He began his writing career as a reporter for daily newspapers in Cincinnati and New Orleans, and graduated eventually to such periodicals as *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Harper's Monthly* (in which *Chita* was first published, in instalments, in 1888). When he fled to Japan in 1890, five books had been published (apart from his Creole proverbs and recipes); his many books on Japan were published in the United States, and after his death some sixteen further volumes of periodical, journalistic and fragmentary writings were collected and published by various American editors.

While Hearn's work is a part of American literature, it can hardly be said that Hearn himself was a part of America. Like Poe, who seems to be the only American author whom Hearn admired (even to the extent of being pleased with the nick-name 'The Raven'), Hearn was completely out of sympathy with the whole of American life in his day. His distaste for America, and indeed for civilization generally, was summed up in his outburst just before he left America forever: 'Carpets—pianos—windows—curtains—brass bands—churches! How I hate them! Would I had been born savage. The curse of civilized cities is upon me.'<sup>1</sup> Hearn's

abhorrence of civilization and his perpetual flight from it, his intransigent social, moral and religious non-conformism, his attraction towards the exotic, the macabre and the primitive, his cosmopolitan aestheticism, and his 'dream of a poetical prose'<sup>2</sup> make him one of the most fascinating figures in what was, generally, a rather drab, provincial and unimaginative era.

As a writer of fiction Hearn occupies an anomalous position, similar to that, in English fiction, of George Borrow, with whom he had affinities. Borrow, like Hearn, had little but contempt for the society and standards of his time. As Hearn disturbed his readers by his 'worship of the Odd, the Queer, the Strange, the Exotic, the Monstrous',<sup>3</sup> Borrow had affronted his readers by his fondness for gypsies, bruisers, and low-life generally, and by his gospel of truculent, peripatetic individualism. Again like Borrow, who had perplexed his readers by a dubious amalgam of autobiography and fiction, Hearn was virtually incapable of invention. He was frequently urged by friends to write more fiction. To one publisher, Henry Alden, he confessed :

'I am convinced I have no creative talent, no constructive ability for the manufacture of fiction. I cannot write a story . . . What is needed is the expression of real life. That I know I shall never be able to give. But real life is something I spend my whole existence in trying to get away from as far as possible. This is perhaps morbid,—a sign of defective organization; but it is a part of my nature.'<sup>4</sup>

Hence Hearn, like Borrow, in his few attempts at fiction was forced to rely on his own experience, on observed incidents, on stories already told or on reported anecdotes.

Much of the material used in *Chita* can easily be traced to such sources. The story of the catastrophe of L'Ile Dernière, which Hearn made an integral part of *Chita*, he had heard from George W. Cable (who protested against Hearn's plagiarism, while admitting his literary triumph); the story of *Chita* herself was also factual. Hearn wrote in a letter to George M. Gould :

'*Chita* was founded on the fact of a child saved from the Last Island disaster by some Louisiana fisher-folk, and brought up by them. Years after a Creole hunter recognized her, and reported her whereabouts to relatives. These, who were rich, determined to bring her up as young ladies are brought up in the South, and had her sent to a convent. But she had lived the free healthy life of the coast, and could not bear the convent; she ran away from it, married a fisherman, and lives somewhere down there,—the mother of multitudinous children.'<sup>5</sup>



### Lafcadio Hearn's *Chita*

(This account is quoted in full, because what Hearn did not use is as important as what he did use as a clue to the true nature of the book.) Finally, for his description of the illness and death of 'Chita's' father, Hearn obtained information on the physiological and psychological effects of yellow fever from his friend, Dr Matas.

Hearn, then, derived much of his material for *Chita* from outside. Yet George M. Gould is right in describing the book as 'the first glimpse of what Mr. Hearn could write from out of himself; . . . what we remember and admire is the fabric itself which only Hearn could have woven'.<sup>6</sup> This comment suggests—truly I think—that *Chita* is more than a piece of exotic romanticism, a series of gorgeous impressionistic pictures; although its ingredients were borrowed from outside, they were fused into a meaningful unity, a unity which derives a strange vibrancy from Hearn's innermost being.

As one lists the sources of the book, one is inevitably reminded of another writer who was long mistakenly regarded as a purveyor of exotic romance. One remembers that Conrad, like Hearn, bewailed his inability to manufacture fiction. ('The sustained invention of a really telling lie demands a talent which I do not possess.') Most of Conrad's novels were, like Borrow's *Lavengro*, re-workings of his own life experience; or else, like *Chita*, they were based on stories he had heard in odd corners of the world. Conrad realized that 'the nature of my writing runs the risk of being obscured by the nature of my material', but his own prefaces often helped to obscure the nature of his writing. In his prefaces Conrad generally specified the real-life origins of his characters and situations: by doing so he confirmed his readers (and critics) in the mistaken belief that he was a simple novelist of the sea, and that such stories as *The Secret Sharer* and *The Heart of Darkness*, and such novels as *Lord Jim* and *The Nigger of the Narcissus* had no connection with his own inner life. But there are occasional hints in the prefaces of the real sources of his work. In the preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus* he wrote: 'The artist descends within himself, and in that lonely region of stress and strife . . . he finds the terms of his appeal.' Recent criticism of Conrad has shown how subjective his work actually is, how his novels, though overtly objective records of actual occurrences, really dramatize his own inner tensions, his sense of guilt and of moral isolation.

The purpose of this apparent digression is to suggest that in considering *Chita*, as in considering *Lord Jim* or *The Secret Sharer*, we should not be misled into assuming, simply because we can point to the external sources of the story, that the book has no relevance to Hearn's inner life. As a matter of fact, Hearn

was probably more aware than any writer in English of his time, of the part played by the unconscious in creative writing. There are frequent references in his letters to the inner life, the unconscious, the unknown self.

‘Everyone has an inner life of his own,—which no other eye can see, and the great secrets of which are never revealed, although occasionally when we create something beautiful, we betray a faint glimpse of it—sudden and brief, as of a door opening and shutting in the night.’ ‘Unconscious brain-work is the best to develop . . . latent feeling and thought. By quietly writing the thing over and over again, I find that the emotion or idea *develops itself* in the process—unconsciously. When the best result comes, it ought to surprise you, for our best work is out of the Unconscious.’<sup>8</sup> ‘It is necessary to obey the impulses of the Unknown for Art’s sake—or rather you *must* obey them.’<sup>9</sup>

The essential difference between Conrad and Hearn, then, is not that Conrad wrote out of his subconscious while Hearn did not (or vice-versa); the difference is that whereas Conrad was determined to resist ‘the impulses of the Unknown’, to define and so control the subconscious, Hearn did not question its dictates. Hearn had little of the austere, consciously held moral code, the conception of fidelity to an ideal of conduct, the sense of human solidarity which give tension to Conrad’s novels. So, whereas such stories of Conrad’s as *The Secret Sharer* and *The Heart of Darkness* spring from his awareness of potential criminality in the unconscious mind, *Chita*, it seems to me, springs from Hearn’s yearning to relapse into the unconscious mind, to regain the state of quiescence in which, it is supposed, human life begins.

What justification is there for such a reading of the book? One of Hearn’s numerous biographers, Nina H. Kennard, provides one important piece of evidence. She remarks of *Chita* that

‘every now and then memories of his childhood fall across its pages, illumining them as with sudden light. Chita, at the Viosca Chenière, conquering her terror of the sea and learning to swim, watching the quivering pinkness of waters curled by the breath of morning . . . ; Chita learning the secrets of air, . . . the scudding of clouds, . . . and the shriek of gulls . . . , foretelling wild weather, are but reminiscences of his own childish existence at Tramore.’<sup>10</sup>

Tramore is the sea-side resort in southern Ireland where Hearn spent the happiest days of his youth, and probably of his whole life, alone with sunlit water, blue sky, and swooping darting birds.

The self-identification of Hearn with Chita at this point is im-



portant, because in this section of the book (Part II, Chapter II, beginning '... She began to learn the life of the coast') Hearn explicitly asks: 'What had she lost of life by her swift translation from the dusty existence of cities to the open immensity of nature's freedom? What did she gain?' What she lost (or rather 'was saved from') is summed up in a single paragraph—'Bitternesses and restraints and disappointments . . . the factitious life of society . . . obligations . . . , injustice . . . , cruel necessity . . . , austere constraints . . . progressively augmenting weariness'. What she gains takes two lyrical pages to detail; the most important passages are these:

'She saw and heard and felt much of that which, though old as the heavens and the earth, is yet eternally new and eternally young with the holiness of beauty—eternally mystical and divine—eternally weird; the unveiled magnificence of Nature's moods—the perpetual poem hymned by wind and surge—the everlasting splendor of the sky.' 'Unknowingly she came to know the immemorial sympathy of the mind with the Soul of the World.'

And, describing the quiet, speechless, mindless serenity of the fisher-folk who are Chita's only companions:

'They would stare at the flickering of the current, at the drifting of clouds and buzzards—seldom looking at each other and always turning their black eyes again to sea or sky. Even thus one sees the horses and cattle of the coast, seeking the beach to escape the whizzing flies;—all watch the long waves rolling in, and sometimes turn their heads a moment to look at one another.'

We are reminded by this of a passage in Hearn's letters, provoked by the 'beastly machinery called New York':

'I want to get back among the monkeys and parrots, under a violet sky among green peaks and an eternally lilac and lukewarm sea,—where clothing is superfluous and reading too much of an exertion,—where everybody sleeps 14 hours out of the 24.'<sup>11</sup>

Chita's companions are no more afflicted by thought than the monkeys and the parrots; and this is the state towards which Chita herself is developing. It becomes clear that for Hearn Viosca's Point is a Garden of Eden, a symbol of human life in complete harmony with nature, untroubled by thought or the obligations and constraints of society. In the novel, in fact, Chita attains the state for which Hearn himself longed. Perhaps most important of all, in this section, is Chita's overcoming of her fear

of the sea. 'And, little by little, she also learned the wonderful healing and caressing power of the monster, whose cool embrace at once dispelled all drowsiness, feverishness, weariness . . . ' This is remarkably close to those stanzas in Swinburne's *The Triumph of Time*, in which the image of the sea is fused with that of the mother, stanzas which express longing to find peace within the sea as in the body of a mother:

O fair, green-girdled mother of mine,  
Sea that art clothed with the sun and the rain,  
Thy sweet hard kisses are strong like wine,  
Thy large embraces are keen like pain.  
Save me and hide me with all thy waves . . .

*Chita* is a romantic work, not in any pejorative sense, but in the full sense of the term, as expounded, for example, by Lascelles Abercrombie: it is a work 'whose reality depends upon the inner experience projected into its fantastic adventure'.<sup>12</sup> Once the central complex of feeling out of which the work springs is understood, features of the book which at first seem puzzling fall into place. What, for example, is the significance, in the pattern of the book as a whole, of the death in agony of Chita's father? It will be remembered that in the real-life story which Hearn was using, the storm-orphaned child was eventually brought back to civilization by rich relatives. In the novel, Julien is overtly the devoted father and husband who has lost his loved ones, and who dies tragically just when he has found his long-lost daughter, now grown into the image of her dead mother. But at the symbolic level Julien is the emissary of a 'pest-smitten' civilization, who would have dragged his daughter back to the bitter weariness of civilization; if Chita is to escape this fate, her father must die.

One must note in passing, however, the horrifyingly real description of Julien's delirium as he is dying of yellow fever. Tracing antecedents and fore-runners of the interior monologue has become a popular literary parlour-game. But no one, I think, has noticed how closely the last two sections of *Chita*, with their polyglot ravings, approximate to Dujardin's famous definition:

'The interior monologue is that unheard or unspoken speech by which a character expresses his inmost thoughts—those lying nearest to the unconscious—without regard to logical organization, by means of direct sentences reduced to the syntactic minimum, in such a way as to give the impression of reproducing the thoughts as they come into the mind.'

In the fury of the fever the actualities of the present mingle with memories of the past and with hallucination. 'Quick!—quick!—



hold fast to the table, Adele!—never let go.' . . . 'Up—up—up!—what! higher yet? Up to the red sky! Red—black—red—heated iron when its vermilion dies. So, too, the frightful flood! And noiseless. Noiseless because heavy, clammy—thick, warm, sickening . . . blood?'

Other sections of the book take on a deeper meaning. One sees (in Part I, Section VI) that the holiday-makers who danced and 'pledged, and hoped, and loved, and promised with never a care of the morrow', while the storm that was to destroy them raged outside (in a sense reminiscent of Poe's *Masque of the Red Death*), are representatives and symbols of a whole civilization doomed to perish. Similarly, plague-ridden New Orleans, which is dreadfully evoked in all its stifling, suffocating heat ('Heat motionless and ponderous. The steel-blue of the sky bleached from the furnace-circle of the horizon;—the lukewarm river ran yellow and noiseless, as a torrent of fluid wax') is the hellish counterpart of the heavenly Viosca's Point. Throughout the book we are constantly aware of the opposition between the two symbolic worlds: the opposition is most explicit, as already suggested, in the section concerning Chita's childhood, but it is also evident in the later account of Julien's journey with the two fishermen, Carmelo and Sparicio, from New Orleans to Viosca's Point. The two fishermen, singing, are transformed in Julien's fancy to a princely page and a king. Later Julien, communing with 'the vast sweetness of the violet night', is filled with

'that awful joy, so near akin to sadness which the sense of the Infinite brings—when one feels the poetry of the Most Ancient and Most Excellent of Poets, and then is smitten at once with the contrast—thoughts of the sickliness and selfishness of Man—of the blindness and brutality of cities, whereunto the divine blue light never purely comes, and the Sanctification of the silences never descends . . . furious cities walled away from heaven' (Part III, Section IV).

After *Chita* was in the publisher's hands, Hearn received from George M. Gould a pamphlet on the *Color Sense*. Acknowledging the pamphlet, he wrote to Gould: 'When you read [*Chita*] . . . I think you will find much of what you have said regarding the Aesthetic Symbolism of Colour therein expressed, intuitively,—especially regarding the holiness of the sky-colour,—the divinity of Blue. Blue is the World-Soul.'<sup>13</sup> This apprehension of the divinity of blue is even more clearly expressed in Part I, Section IV. Here it is quite explicitly linked with the yearning to sink into a mindless peace:

'Out of Time and Space you begin to dream with open eyes—to drift into delicious oblivion of facts—to forget the past, the present, the substantial—to comprehend nothing but the existence of that infinite Blue Ghost as something into which you would wish to melt utterly away forever . . . .'

From what an emotional depth such yearnings emanate is indicated in what F. L. Pattee describes as 'a later bit of impressionism', which contains the sole reference in Hearn's writing to his mother (from whom he was parted at the age of seven):

'I have memory of a place and a magical time, in which the sun and the moon were larger and brighter than now. Whether it was of this life or of some life before, I can not tell, but I know the sky was very much more blue, and nearer to the world— . . . Each day there were new wonders and new pleasures for me, and all that country and time were softly ruled by one who thought only of ways to make me happy. . . . When day was done and there fell the great hush of the night before moonrise, she would tell me stories that made me tingle from head to foot with pleasure . . . . And when the pleasure became too great, she would sing a weird little song which always brought sleep.'<sup>14</sup>

The Blue Ghost and the Mother image clearly are closely associated in Hearn's mind.

There are several other features of the book on which comment should be made. The features generally emphasized by Hearn's critics are the impressionistic vividness of his descriptions of the sea, of the islands gradually being eroded away by the sea, of the bayous, of the storm (which certainly challenges comparison with Byron and Conrad); his Lawrentian power of rendering and communicating sensations (particularly notable in the descriptions of swimming, and the account of Julien's fever); the rhapsodic style, jagged, exclamatory, blazing with colour. But I have preferred to confine the discussion to an attempt to show that *Chita* is more than 'a loosely gathered bundle of fictional sketches';<sup>15</sup> that although it has little of conventional plot-structure, it has a unity springing from Hearn's conscious hatred of civilization, and his longing for a state of quiescence, of mindless submergence in nature, infinity, the Blue Ghost. Although *Chita* may be a wish-fulfilment fantasy, in which Hearn vicariously attains this state, which in his wanderings ('not prompted by hope of gain, not determined by pleasure, but simply compelled by certain necessities of his being'<sup>16</sup>) he was never able to attain, the book, with its overtones of symbolism and myth, is especially interesting in a period when objectivity and documentary realism are no longer so highly



## *Ugo Foscolo: A critical Theory of Translation*

regarded in the novel. Chita, in fact, is a forerunner of the modern fiction in which writers, watching (as Philip Rahv puts it) 'their own image in the mirror and listening to inner promptings' attempt to express 'the motley strivings of the inner self—dreams, visions and fantasies'.<sup>17</sup>

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Matthew Josephson, *Portrait of the Artist as American* (New York, 1930), p. 216.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Bisland, *The Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn* (Boston, 1906), I, 374.

<sup>3</sup> *Life and Letters*, I, 328.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Vera McWilliams, *Lafcadio Hearn* (Boston, 1946), p. 253.

<sup>5</sup> *Life and Letters*, I, 426-427.

<sup>6</sup> George M. Gould, *Concerning Lafcadio Hearn* (Philadelphia, 1908), p. 226.

<sup>7</sup> *Life and Letters*, I, 196.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 140.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in McWilliams, p. 213.

<sup>10</sup> Nina H. Kennard, *Lafcadio Hearn* (New York, 1912), pp. 35-36.

<sup>11</sup> *Life and Letters*, I, 444.

<sup>12</sup> Lascelles Abercrombie, *Romanticism* (London, 1927), p. 33.

<sup>13</sup> *Life and Letters*, I, 394.

<sup>14</sup> Fred Lewis Pattee, *A History of American Literature Since 1870* (New York, 1915), p. 423.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 423.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Robert E. Spiller *et al.*, *Literary History of the United States* (New York, 1953), p. 1071.

<sup>17</sup> Philip Rahv, *Image and Idea* (New York, 1949), p. 164.

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## UGO FOSCOLO: A CRITICAL THEORY OF TRANSLATION

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The romantic movement in Italy seems, on the surface at least, a far more modest and ambiguous affair than its other European counterparts. In his account of Italian romantic criticism, G. A. Borgese<sup>1</sup> discovers such a wide area of agreement between the tenets of the two opposing schools that the contest, at a distance in time, takes on something of the quality of literary shadow-boxing. The authors of the period similarly resist entry into the welcoming

pigeon-holes of the literary historian, and among them the case of Ugo Foscolo is typical in its contrasts. He was the creator of the novel, *Iacopo Ortis*, largely autobiographical and with a romantic theme of melancholy and despair leading to suicide, and yet also the poet of Greece, of an ideal world of serene beauty and time-defying heroism.

Foscolo, who took an active part in the classical-romantic polemic, strenuously rejected being numbered among the innovators. He found it impossible, for instance, to admit the romantic rejection of mythology as an element in poetry, for this seemed to him the denial of the enduring validity of an ever vital tradition. Yet, as a critic, he laboured to establish the historical approach, to show that each poet must be understood in the context of his age, and that the critic's task was to seek to penetrate the barrier which time had erected between the words of the past and our understanding of them. In what way did Foscolo reconcile his classical sense of the continuing value of tradition with his romantic demonstration of the necessity of historical perspective?

The purpose of this article is to examine, in the light of this problem, Foscolo's theories of translation and his application of them. In these writings Foscolo, the critic, sought to formulate an answer to problems of which his sensitivity and experience as a poet had made him aware, in particular to that of the destruction of the unity of form and content which the translator seemed doomed to bring about. And since his theories arose out of his attempt to translate Homer, a poet far removed in time and space, he was led to the realisation that poetry must be understood historically, a realisation which was the germ of the school of criticism in which Foscolo was the forerunner of De Sanctis<sup>2</sup>. Two points arise from this examination which are relevant to our enquiry. Firstly, the apparent contrast between Foscolo's theories and his application of them as criteria of judgement to the translations of others; secondly, the light which these theories can throw on his practice as a poet, with particular reference to his sense of tradition.

Foscolo published his translation of Book I of the *Iliad* in 1807, accompanied by Cesarotti's prose version and Monti's verse translation, with a short preface (*Intendimento del traduttore*) in which he expounded his theories. In 1810 he returned to the subject in a review of Pindemonte's version of the first two books of the *Odyssey*, paraphrasing and somewhat expanding the ideas he had put forward three years before. For his point of departure Foscolo was indebted to Vico who, almost a century earlier, had interpreted Homer as the poet of a primitive and heroic age, the voice of a



time when poetry and history were one<sup>3</sup>. Thus the business of the critic was to see this world of Homer in each word of his poem; only then could the poet begin translating.

Foscolo arranged his examination of the translator's task under three headings—imagery, style and passion. First imagery:

‘L'esattezza delle *immagini* omeriche non può derivare in chi le copia se non dalla teologia, dagli usi e dalle arti dell'età eroiche; e chi traduce non dee scrivere verso senza imbevversì a tutto potere delle dottrine di tanti scrittori intorno ad Omero.’<sup>4</sup>

This was no mere plea for more and better archaeology. Foscolo was, if anything, more severe on the ‘exact’ translations of Homer than on those produced with little Greek. From the consideration of poetry as the product of a given age and people, only comprehensible by constant reference to the historical context, there followed, in Foscolo's later criticism, an insight into the interplay between the individual poetic personality and the age in which it was formed, a linking of the psychological and historical approaches, that led him far away from the critical judgements of neo-classicism, based on fixed rhetorical categories applicable equally to all ages and all poets.

The next element of poetry was style which, in its turn, Foscolo resolved into three subdivisions—harmony, movement and colour.

‘*L'armonia* dipende dal suono assoluto d'ogni parola, dalla collocazione e dal metro: or l'armonia nella versione deve dunque sconnettersi, e il traduttore, mutando parole, metro e collocazione, dee pur racquistare nella sua lingua questa dote essenziale dell'eloquenza poetica.’<sup>5</sup>

Foscolo does not further elaborate here what he understands by harmony, and this statement, whilst obviously recognising the necessary destruction of the unity of form and content in translation, does not seem to progress beyond a generic conception of the music of poetry, and leaves one with the impression that Foscolo had not wholly freed himself from the idea of formal beauty as an absolute quality which might, in some way, be added by the poet-translator. But we shall return to the question of music and metre later. The consideration of movement and colour, by which Foscolo understood the use of verbs, adjectives and particles linking ideas and attributing qualities to them, brings him to the fundamental point of his theory:

‘. . . il colorito dipende dagli epiteti che assegnano qualità a tutti gli oggetti. Questi oggetti stanno nè' sostantivi, *cane, liono, Achille, nave* ec.; ma, lasciati senza azione e senza qualità, non possono avere nè passione mai nè pittura. Or ogni parola, oltre

il suo significato primitivo e principale, ha in ogni lingua molte minime idee accessorie e concomitanti, che danno sempre più movimento e più tinte al significato primitivo. I sostantivi hanno minor numero di queste idee secondarie; i verbi ne hanno sempre di più, e più ancora le particelle; e basta che chiunque scrive consideri i diversi accidenti della particella *ma*; negli epiteti poi le idee minime e accessorie sono infinite. Trattanto le idee concomitanti delle lingue antichissime si sono smarrite per noi posterì con l'educazione e la metafisica de' popoli quasi obbliati: e i dizionari non ne mostrano che il vocabolo esanime.<sup>4</sup>

To illustrate the difficulties that this idea raised for the translator, Foscolo accompanied his version by certain *Considerazioni* on the translation of three lines of the Iliad,<sup>5</sup> describing Jupiter's nod. He examines each Greek word in order to illustrate its principal and accessory meanings. Jupiter, for instance, is called *Kronioon*, son of Saturn, in Italian *Saturnio*. *Kronioon*, because of its derivation from *Kronos* (time)

'eccita nel pensiero l'ignota origine de' secoli, la lor successione, e il loro termine, illimitato per l'umana immaginazione: quindi l'eternità; quindi il religioso terrore della mente per questo attributo della divinità, alla quale gli uomini per l'opinione dell'immortalità dell'animo si credono eternamente soggetti: e i popoli si sono sempre pasciuti di religione, di speranze e di terrore. Aggiungi che a' tempi omerici il nome *Saturnio* era pregno di tradizioni teologiche, della genealogia de' Numi: favole che ad ogni modo rappresentavano *immagini*, nutrivano *passioni*, e conferivano allo *stile poetico*. Ma *Saturnio* nella poesia moderna sarà sempre parola esamine.<sup>6</sup>

Words, then, are history; each one like a point of light surrounded by mirrors which are the minds of contemporary readers, mirrors so angled as to catch and reflect back fully the light at the centre. But the mirrors of those who come after are cracked and darkened or turned away towards other illuminations. Even if the critic-historian can succeed in recreating the reactions of a Greek reader, the translator must undo his work, for to substitute a modern word for the original is to put out the light altogether.

Does then the deeper insight of the critic necessarily lead to the deeper despair of the translator? Foscolo's answer is something of a compromise. 'Al traduttore dunque non resta che di dare tutto il valore del significato primitivo; ma perchè senza le idee concomitanti la poesia non avrebbe nè varietà nè calore nè vita, deve studiarsi ad un tempo di dare ai vocaboli della sua traduzione le idee accessorie e l'armonia che gli verranno trasfuse



nella mente e nell'anima dall'originale." The poet-translator must work, as it were, on the promptings of the original; the harmonies and associations he evokes will be his own but suggested by his text, variations on a laid down theme.

At this point Foscolo ends his considerations by taking up the third element of poetry, passion.

'Per la *passione*, elemento più necessario degli altri, e così universalmente diffuso ne' libri d'Omero, se il traduttore lascerà freddi i lettori, non sarà colpa dell'incertezza del gusto nè dell' antichità delle storie, ma tutta sua e della natura del suo cuore.'

The demand for passion, for 'il furor natio' as Alfieri had called it, arose from the newly awakened consciousness of the high seriousness and purpose of literature in the early 19th century; 'inspiration', 'the divine gift of poetry', were more important than correctness. When Foscolo wrote to Monti<sup>8</sup> that although the latter knew no Greek he had, as a true poet, understood Homer better than all the scholars, he was not indulging in a skilful double-edged compliment, but expressing a fundamental belief.

The translator of poetry must, therefore, be not only gifted with critical and historical insight, but also, and most essentially, be a poet. This was the first canon of judgement to be applied to a translation; one could then go on to inquire into what sort of poetry had been produced and how far it was comparable with that of the original. Foscolo examined his own version of Homer on this basis and found it wanting. Even conceding that he had employed all the apparatus of learning, even admiring the many poetic qualities of the work, '... in questa versione poetica non si sente nè un'aura pure dello spirito originale. Tu ravvisi tutti i contorni, tutti i minimi accidenti del volto; ma l'espressione del volto è di carattere assai diverso. Pare che un'altra passione ed un'altr'anima muovano con più forza e meno grazia que' muscoli.'<sup>9</sup> The dilemma would seem insoluble. The translator must be a poet, but because he is a poet he will impress upon his version his own personality and the spirit of the original will be lost. There was only one possible way out. '... per ben tradurre vuolsi una armonia d'anima tra il traduttore e l'autore: la natura sola può darla, e l'esperimento soltanto mostrerebbe se l'abbiamo'.<sup>10</sup> But such *Wahlverwandschaften* are exceeding rare and it is significant that Foscolo illustrates his point with a negative example, Annibal Caro, the sixteenth century translator of Virgil, who, for all his gifts, '... non aveva l'anima virgiliana'.<sup>10</sup>

Thus the inquiry seemed to end in a *reductio ad absurdum*, but it was the process rather than the result that mattered. Historical

reconstruction became one of the main tasks of criticism. The historical context was not a source of odd gobbets of background information but present in every word and phrase. Only through an imaginative understanding of the poet's times could the nature of his poetry be understood. Here, in germ, was the insight into the unity of the history of literature and of society that was to guide De Sanctis in the writing of his *Storia*. But poetry, though nourished by the humus of the poet's age, was yet the product of passion, of individual genius. Without the element of passion the translator was bound to fail, but its possession, paradoxically, led again to failure of a different kind, for the true poet necessarily imbued his version with his own, generally alien, spirit. For the critic this negation implied an affirmation. His business, it followed, was to illuminate and characterise, to define the nature of the poet's personality, of his essentially individual genius. Thus the approach to poetry was to be psychological and historical; poetry was to be understood rather than judged, and to understand implied an investigation not only of the end product, the finished poem, but into how the poem had come into being, into the psychological processes of the author and their interplay with the age of which he was part. The approaches suggested or implied were those which nineteenth century criticism adopted. Yet in Foscolo's own criticism one frequently finds judgements and observations that would not be out of place in the most conventional neo-classical treatise. A specific example is the article in which he applied his theory of translation to Wiffen's English version of Tasso.

In considering this translation Foscolo was hampered by his limited acquaintance with English poetic diction, but it nevertheless contains acute judgements based on his theories. At times, however, the theories and their implications seem to be forgotten. Foscolo is at his best in a discussion of the various imitations, including Tasso's, of the Homeric simile of the horse fleeing from its stable to the freedom of the meadows; he isolates the essential element of the picture, the horse's exultant consciousness of its own grace and power, which the imitators had missed. Yet, in the next paragraph, he criticises Wiffen for attributing 'broad' hoofs to the horse, an adjective not to be found in Tasso. 'Si fatta larghezza sarebbe sproporzionata alla snellezza e schiettezza delle gambe; il loro peso s'opporrebbe alla elasticità de' muscoli; e inoltre quanto più l'unghia protende, tanto più il cavallo sta a rischio d'incespicare.'<sup>12</sup> On the surface it is a pedantic observation; the identification of poetic truth with factual accuracy, however tempting, was a principle that led straight back to the rationalist

type of criticism with its narrow conception of verisimilitude from which Foscolo had turned away. But there is a further consideration. All his life Foscolo was a passionate lover of horses, and long had in mind to compose a poem on the subject. It seems at least probable that Wiffen's adjective conflicted with a poetic intuition of Foscolo, and that what appears to be a scruple of fact is rather an indication of his personal sensitivity as a poet.

Other remarks treat of the music of language and verse forms, recalling the discussion of harmony. Italian, we learn, is, absolutely, more musical than English. But the English translator of Tasso 'ha per compenso la stanza spenseriana che nelle combinazioni musicali tra i versi è infinitamente superiore all'italiana, la quale facilmente cade in una melodiosa monotonia . . .'<sup>13</sup> In the Spenserian form the longer last line avoids monotony and rounds off the stanza with 'la solenne gravità delle arcate finali del basso d'un'orchestra.'<sup>14</sup> No modern epic metres, however, possess the hexameter's quality of 'length', but Italian can to some extent overcome this disadvantage because of its abundance of vowels and hence of long syllables. The idea that a musical quality inheres in certain languages and certain verse forms, in some way independent of the use that poets make of them, would again seem to lead back to neo-classical criticism with its insistence on purely formal elements. But again such statements may be interpreted in the light of Foscolo's own experience as a poet. We are used to thinking of the genesis of a poem in terms of some experience which then finds its adequate formal expression. Yet among the possible experiences is that of the music of a verse form or metre. A modern poet-critic has observed: 'I know that a poem, or a passage of a poem, may tend to realize itself first as a particular rhythm before it reaches expression in words, and that this rhythm may bring to birth the idea and the image . . .'<sup>15</sup> It is no stretching of Eliot's point to suggest that such musical starting points may be, in the first instance, derived from the poetry of others. The classical hexameter and the Spenserian stanza were not available to the Italian poet, but their harmonies could move him and, potentially, inspire. Foscolo's own poetry bears witness to the type of musical sensitivity that underlay these remarks. One recalls, for instance, that in the first of his odes (*A Luigia Pallavicini*) he used a stanza of equal lines, whereas in the second (*All'amica risanata*), following the example of Parini in *Il messaggio*, he employed a lengthened final line the effect of which can hardly be better defined than by the words he uses of the Spenserian form.<sup>16</sup> And one of the features of his use of the Italian heroic metre (*versi sciolti*) in *Dei Sepolcri* is the way in which the natural pause at the



end of a line often virtually disappears, so that both sense and rhythm run on into the line following, giving the impression of a more protracted metre.<sup>17</sup>

With Foscolo one is dealing with that complex figure, the poet-critic. His reading of the poetry of others was made from two standpoints. Firstly there was the attempt to understand such poetry as different from his own, to characterise its 'otherness', and this effort led to the formulation of the psychological-historical approach that was so fruitful in his own later criticism and in that of the Italian nineteenth century generally. On the other hand he was intent on perceiving those elements in other poetry that were immediately relevant to his own inspiration; what he could use in some way, what evoked from him a personal response was noted with approval; what he found conflicting and unusable was rejected. Such perceptions are not, in a sense, criticism at all, and although one is tempted to interpret them as survivals of neo-classical modes of thought in a writer of the transition, it is more appropriate to characterise them simply as the instinctive reactions, the marginal jottings of a poet's sensitivity. Yet there is an underlying unity, for without such sensitivity Foscolo could not have used the historical approach in the way that he did. 'Per disvolgere le bellezze di una poesia, il critico deve risalire per gli stessi ragionamenti e guidizi i quali hanno determinato il poeta a scrivere nel modo che ha fatto. Ma un critico di questa fatta sarebbe un poeta.'<sup>18</sup> No critic could recreate the processes by which poetry had come into being unless he was conscious, from his own direct experience of the poet's craft, of their workings within himself.

Any account of Foscolo the critic inevitably leads back to the poet, and we may now turn to the wider question of the relation between the main element of his translation theory, the historical associations of words, and his poetic practice. One necessarily thinks of *Dei Sepolcri*, the poem which grew with and, to an extent, out of his study of Homer. The great theme of the poem is the theme of tradition, tradition which is kept alive in men's minds and hearts by the cult of tombs and by the eternal words of poets, traditions, then, as something living and enduring, ever renewed. By what means is this theme expressed? How does Foscolo make us feel the reality of the past and its eternal relevance to the present? Precisely through the use of 'classical' diction, through words which are rich in reminiscences, words which, through their multifold associations, are the voice, in the present, of the past. There is an interesting passage in the Tasso article which, taken in conjunction with an earlier statement<sup>19</sup> that he felt his own

genius more fitted to translate Milton than Homer, indicates that Foscolo was critically conscious of this aspect of his poetry. He writes thus of the art of which Milton, he felt, was the great exponent in English: '... (il poeta) può condensare nelle parole, oltre al significato lor primitivo, tutte le idee concomitanti di cui vanno sempre impregnandosi; ed egli può anche infonderne delle nuove . . . , e connetterle fra di loro a illuminarsi scambievolmente.'<sup>20</sup> Foscolo did indeed infuse new associations into words rich with the traditional ones, and his feeling for tradition itself was infused with a new spirit, a spirit which was profoundly romantic in its nostalgic evocation of a glorious and heroic past, of a Greece which was not Homer's (how could it be?), but Foscolo's, the mythical country where his aspirations and ideals found their fulfilment. Here then was the fusion of the sense of historical perspective and the feeling for tradition. It was impossible, as the theory of translation had shown, to reproduce the past, but the poet sought not to reproduce but to relive, to project his spirit into a past of its own shaping, and in this task his awareness of the associations with which words had become impregnated on their journey through time became, no longer an obstacle, but the very condition of his achievement.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Storia della critica romantica in Italia* (Milano, 1949).

<sup>2</sup> M. Fubini, *Ugo Foscolo, Saggi letterari* (Torino, 1926), p. XXV, considers the theories on translation to be the 'antecedenti diretti' of Foscolo's literary criticism. Borgese (*op. cit.*, p. 263), sums up the debt of Italian 19th century criticism to Foscolo thus: '... per il tentativo d'includere il filo della storia letteraria nella trama di quella del progresso civile egli era all'avanguardia. Aperse la strada a tutta la nostra critica del secolo XIX, che più non se ne dipartì.'

<sup>3</sup> *Scienza Nuova*, III, 'Della scoperta del vero Omero'.

<sup>4</sup> I have used, wherever possible, the *Edizione Nazionale delle Opere di Ugo Foscolo*, still in course of publication by Le Monnier, Firenze, and refer to it by the abbreviation *E.N.* 'Sulla traduzione dell'Odissea', *E.N.*, VII, p. 206.

<sup>5</sup> *Iliad*, I, 11.528-30.

<sup>6</sup> Fubini, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> 'Odissea', p. 208.

<sup>8</sup> In the dedicatory letter to the *Iliad* translation.

<sup>9</sup> 'Odissea', p. 209.

<sup>10</sup> 'Odissea', p. 210.

<sup>11</sup> 'Della Gerusalemme Liberata tradotta in versi inglesi', *E.N.*, X, pp. 529-81. The article first appeared, in English, in the *Westminster Review* of October 1826. The English translation was *Jerusalem Delivered translated into English Spenserian Verse* by J. H. Wiffen, London 1826.

<sup>12</sup> 'Gerusalemme', p. 572.

<sup>13</sup> 'Gerusalemme', p. 578.

<sup>14</sup> 'Gerusalemme', p. 579.

<sup>15</sup> T. S. Eliot, *The Music of Poetry*.

<sup>16</sup> e.g. Ebbei in quel mar la culla:  
ivi erra. ignudo spirito,  
di Faon la fanciulla;  
e se il notturno zefiro  
blando sui flutti spira,  
suonano i liti un lamentar di ira.

<sup>17</sup> The first lines, for instance:

All'ombra de' cipressi e dentro l'urne  
Confortate di pianto è forse il sonno  
Della morte men duro?

Had Foscolo used a rhymed metre the task would have been far more difficult. He felt that rhyme blandished the ear but detracted from the dignity of high poetry.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted by Fubini, *op. cit.*, p. XXII, from Foscolo's article on Dante in the *Edinburgh Review*, February, 1818.

<sup>19</sup> 'Odisea', p. 210.

<sup>20</sup> 'Gerusalemme', p. 576.

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## IN DEFENCE OF HIPPOCENTAURS

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All readers of Dryden are familiar with his amazing feats of reasoning. One of the most ingenious is the defence of hippocentaurs in the apology for heroic poetry and poetic licence.<sup>1</sup> It runs like this: Hippocentaurs may be considered alien to heroic poetry for the good reason that they are 'out of nature'; but such a charge is 'easy to answer' because the notion of hippocentaur is 'founded on the conjunction of two natures, which have a real separate being'. It evidently does not matter to Dryden that the conjunction itself is unnatural, or, in any case, this may be blinked by quoting Lucretius and passing to another question.<sup>2</sup>

The defence may be dismissed as merely another of Dryden's pleasing sophistries. It is more reasonable to regard it, however, as an example of Augustan uncertainty regarding the limits of verisimilitude in poetry—Dryden is always at his most ingenious when he is trying to square a doubt of the age. Augustan critics never whole-heartedly accepted the distinction between poetic and literal truth, and the bolder images of poetry simply alarmed them. They could credit Aeneas's weight-lifting feats and the



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transformation of his fleet into a shoal of water nymphs, because these acts were performed with the help of gods; but a myrtle dripping blood and horses breaking into speech were too much for them. 'How can our Age', asks Madame Dacier, 'be brought to bear with Tripods moving of themselves, and going into Assemblies, Statues of Gold helping *Vulcan* at his Work? Speaking Horses, and many other Conceits of the like Nature?'<sup>3</sup> Still less of course could they abide the fanciful worlds of Italianate poetry, where trees were bewitched and turned into people, where gossamer maidens precipitated bloody duels, where horses flew, where dragons vomited their young from innumerable heads, and where knights had magical swords as well as valiant hearts. All this world of '*Chimerical* and *Romantic Knight-errantry*'<sup>4</sup> seemed spurious to them: and Reymer censured Spenser for having 'suffer'd himself to be misled by *Ariosto*; with whom blindly rambling on *marvellous* Adventures, he makes no Conscience of *Probability*. All is fanciful and chimerical, without any uniformity, without any foundation in truth; his Poem is perfect Fairyland.'<sup>5</sup>

Poetry must at all costs maintain probability.

For what there is in any Poem, which is out of Nature, and contrary to *Verisimilitude* and *Probability*, can never be *Beautiful*, but *Abominable*.<sup>6</sup>

*Poetry* has no life, nor can have any operation, without *probability*; it may indeed amuse the People, but moves not the *Wise*, for whom alone (according to *Pythagoras*) it is ordain'd.<sup>7</sup>

It was easy enough to insist on the importance of probability, but not so easy to define precisely its limits. One way of approach to the problem was to demarcate poetry from history. The facts of history, Dryden pointed out,<sup>8</sup> were *vera*, whereas poetry had to be not *vera* but *verasimilia*. Poetry might of course make use of history, since, as Le Bossu naively remarks, 'a thing, that is true, may appear such'.<sup>9</sup> It would be neglecting its moral function, however, if it merely transcribed historical events. Some reorganisation of these was necessary, for the ordinary course of events did not demonstrate the workings of poetic justice. Moreover characters and their actions would have to be heightened, so that the examples of virtue would seem more attractive and those of vice more repugnant. Licence in poetical fiction, said Edward Phillips, 'is allow'd the *Poet* chiefly upon this consideration, because, being supposed as he ought to understand the ways of Heroic virtue and Magnanimity from better principles than those of common and implicate opinion, he hath the advantage of representing and setting forth greater *Idea's*, and more noble *Examples* than probably can be

drawn from known History . . .'<sup>10</sup> Poetry is no less true because of this; indeed its truth is greater than history's, being moral truth:

Truth narrative and past is the Idol of the Historians, who worship a dead thing, and truth operative, and by effects continually alive, is the Mistress of Poets, who hath not her existence in matter but in reason.<sup>11</sup>

Nor was poetry merely to copy nature, in the sense of life as it goes on around us. It had certainly to avoid the obviously unnatural. Cowley's love poems were the butt of much Augustan censure because they did not describe the feelings that men in general experience when in love. Sappho's 'Blest as th' Immortal Gods is He' was considered a far better love-poem than any of Cowley's, because it represents exactly the feelings which every lover experiences.<sup>12</sup> This conception of nature, life as generally experienced, however, applied mainly to minor poetry. As far as the great poetry (epic and tragedy) was concerned, the Augustans aimed to represent nature not as it is but as it ought to be, just as they wished a work to be such as ought to please rather than such as did please. Both poetry and painting, says Dryden, 'are not only true imitations of Nature, but of the best Nature, of that which is wrought up to a nobler pitch. They present us with Images more perfect than the Life in any individual: and we have the pleasure to see all the scatter'd Beauties of Nature united by a happy *Chymistry*, without its deformities or faults . . . When we view these Elevated *Ideas* of Nature, the result of that view is Admiration, which is always the cause of Pleasure.'<sup>13</sup>

The heroic poem presented the particular problem of heightening the probable with the marvellous. The marvellous had to be employed in order to arouse wonder and admiration, and at the same time it had to be made probable. This could be achieved in one of two ways: by employing the gods as agents of the marvellous; or by exploiting popular superstitions. The turning of Ulysses' ship into a rock was credible because it was brought about by a god. Rapin is able to credit Aeneas's lifting of a stone so heavy that ten men could scarcely move it because Aeneas is represented as having the help of a god; but he cannot credit the golden bough nor Stentor's voice louder than those of fifty men. And he certainly cannot credit Ariosto's winged horse, his giants and monsters, the wonderful ring which produces invisibility, and the bravery of his women characters 'which he makes valiant in War, contrary to their Natural timidity'.<sup>14</sup> Addison maintains that '*Ulysses*' ship being turned into a Rock, and *Aeneas*' Fleet into a Shoal of Water Nymphs, though they are very surprising Accidents, are neverthe-

less probable, when we are told that they were the Gods who thus transformed them. It is this Kind of Machinery which fills the Poems both of *Homer* and *Virgil* with such Circumstances as are wonderful, but not impossible, and so frequently produce in the Reader the most pleasing Passion that can rise in the Mind of Man, which is Admiration.”<sup>15</sup> Not so, however, the incident in which Ulysses is shown tearing up the myrtle that dropped blood.

This Circumstance seems to have the Marvellous without the Probable, because it is represented as proceeding from natural Causes, without the Interposition of any God, or other supernatural Power capable of producing it . . . without so much as the modern Help of an Enchantment.<sup>16</sup>

The admirable could be accepted as probable if it were in accord with popular belief, for the ‘*admirable* is all that which is against the ordinary course of Nature’, and the ‘*probable* is whatever suits with common opinion’.<sup>17</sup> Dryden, who was more tolerant of fantastic fiction than his contemporaries, used this standard of popular belief to justify the appearance of Polydorus in the *Aeneid*, Tasso’s Enchanted Wood and Spenser’s Bower of Bliss. After asserting that ‘an Heroick Poet is not ty’d to a bare representation of what is true, or exceeding probable . . .’, he declares that it is enough ‘that in all ages and Religions, the greatest part of mankind have believ’d the power of Magick and that there are Spirits, or Spectres, which have appear’d. This I say is foundation enough for Poetry.’<sup>18</sup> In the Preface to *The State of Innocence and Fall of Man*, he defends *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and Ben Jonson’s *Masque of Fairies*, by the same standard.<sup>19</sup> Dryden’s contemporaries, however, were not so liberal. They flatly dismissed enchanted woods, magic castles, dwarfs, dragons and fairies, as the products of a distempered fancy.

What, then, was to be their attitude to Homer? He was a god of poetry to the Augustans, yet many of his fictions were undeniably fantastic. About much of the *Odyssey* there was an air of fantasy. Episodes like those figuring Circe, Polypheme and the Sirens needed to be justified. Others could, as we have seen, be justified as effects of divine intervention. An excuse was made on relative grounds, for the accepted belief was of course that previous ages had been credulous as compared with the age of science, and that consequently in those times the most extravagant tales were believed. Thus Homer was excused in terms of his environment, though still somewhat depreciated in Augustan eyes. Blackmore cannot think how such extravagant tales as some of Homer’s could have been acceptable to any age.<sup>20</sup> Pope preferred Homer to Virgil,



but he had to admit nevertheless that Homer's fictions are often improbable.<sup>21</sup> Le Bossu, however, cannot believe that there is not some special reason for Homer's fictions; he cannot believe that Homer was duped by his own tales. So he suggests that the Circe and Sirens episodes are probable in their contexts. Homer, he says, has succeeded in bringing them 'under the *Human Probability*, by the simplicity of those before whom he causes these fabulous Recitals to be made'. The Phaeaceans were simple, credulous people, so Homer naturally made Ulysses relate them 'Romantick Adventures'. Moreover Homer has seen to it that these tales are not just romantic adventures: he has added something of value to them—

even here the Poet is not unmindful of his more understanding Readers. He has in these Fables given them all the Pleasure that can be reap'd from *Moral Truths*, so pleasantly disguised under these Miraculous *Allegories*. 'Tis by this Means that he has reduced these *Machines* to Truth and a Poetical Probability.<sup>22</sup>

By showing that it was customary in Homer's time to write in allegory, the Augustans were able firstly, to justify as allegories those parts of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* which otherwise they found culpably fantastic, and secondly, to excuse Homer for writing so fantastically on the ground that he was writing, as every poet must, in the spirit and for the taste of his times. Le Bossu warned that the modern habit of regarding only external fictions led to superficial judgments and was especially unfair to Homer:

But I fansie, the satisfaction we so easily find in these *External Fictions* alone, does us some Prejudice. The more we fix there, the less search do we make into the Bottom and Truth of things. This makes us perhaps Equivocate upon the word *Fable*, which we apply so differently to the *Epopée*, and to the *Fictions of Aesop*.

This Prepossession of Mind does Homer a great deal of Dis-kindness; for we are often willing to find such Vertues and good Manners there, which are not there, and which we suppose ought regularly to have been there: Because we are so little acquainted with his way of teaching *Morality*.

From hence it comes to pass that we meet with so great Obscurities in the Precepts of *Aristotle* and *Horace*, who commend Homer so much for that, which we are so little acquainted with, especially if we examine it according to the Ideas of Perfection, which we generally form to our Selves. By this means we shall be subject to great Confusions and many Contradictions. Before ever then we pass a judgment upon these things, and upon *Homer*, who is the Author and first Model of them,

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'tis requisite we rightly comprehend his *Allegories*, and penetrate into the *Moral* and *Physical Truths* of the *Fable*, with which his Poems are so full.<sup>23</sup>

Madame Dacier insists on an allegorical interpretation of Homer, in particular of his gods. If one is to realise that these gods are not really impious, she says, it is necessary to appreciate their allegorical significance. They are of three sorts: those that represent physical causes, those that represent virtues and vices, and those that represent attributes of God. Once this is realised, Homer 'will not only be easily excused, but whatever that great Poet has conceal'd under his Fables and Allegories, will be with Pleasure unravelled. It will appear, that all the Imputations laid on him are vain; and we shall admire the Vastness of his Notions, the Truths they are grounded upon, and the immense Knowledge this Poet was Master of.'<sup>24</sup> Madame Dacier takes earlier commentators on Homer to task for going to extremes: that of refusing to recognise any allegory in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, or that of seeing allegory everywhere, even in the plainest historical fact. The neo-classicist should, of course, take the middle way:

A Mean must be observ'd; that is, what is plain and historical, must be understood plainly and historically, and what is literally too harsh and out of the way, must be sav'd by the Allegory, picking out the Physical, Moral and even Historical Truths, which lie conceal'd under those mysterious Veils, and ingenious Fables.<sup>25</sup>

That the purpose in allegorizing Homer was to rationalize his more romantic fictions is indicated by Madame Dacier's choice of words. For instance, 'sav'd' in 'what is literally too harsh and out of the way, must be sav'd by the Allegory', and 'have Recourse' in 'It is certain, there are many Things in *Homer*, which cannot bear a good Sense, unless we have Recourse to Allegory'.<sup>26</sup>

The belief that much of Homer was allegorical was widely held. There are many passing recapitulations of it in critical essays of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Ozell described the *Iliad* as 'a kind of New Gospel to the *Pagans*, couch'd according to the Custom of those Times, under Fables, Parables, and Allegories . . .'<sup>27</sup> Richard Fiddes maintained that Plato allowed only those men in his Commonwealth who were over fifty years of age to read Homer, because younger men would be unable to penetrate Homer's 'drapery', or literal sense, to his 'real design', or moral.<sup>28</sup> Pope marvels at the 'new and ample Scene of Wonder' which is revealed by an understanding of Homer's allegories.<sup>29</sup> And Addison, while he does not commit himself to the wholly allegori-

cal interpretation of the *Iliad*—that which regards not only the gods, but also the persons and actions, as allegorical—shows that he is strongly in sympathy with this view.<sup>30</sup>

The fact that Homer wrote allegorically did not imply that Augustans might do so too: Homer wrote, and should be read, under a special licence. The Augustans believed that poetry in an enlightened age should be plain and proper; accordingly an elaborate and fanciful device like allegory, even if it be admitted that Homer used it to beautiful effect, should not be employed by Augustan poets.

The Relish which all Antiquity, both *Sacred* and *Profane*, *Greek* and *Barbarian*, had for *Fables*, *Parables*, and *Allegories* (which are one and the same in this place) gave the Ancient Poets a great deal more Liberty than the Moderns have; and make things in Homer pass for Beauties, which would look but ill in a Piece of Modern Poetry.<sup>31</sup>

Pope is full of praise for Homer's allegories, but he points out, nevertheless, that succeeding poets have been right in making less and less use of this form of expression.

For when the Mode of Learning chang'd in following Ages, and Science was deliver'd in a plainer manner, it then became as reasonable in the more modern Poets to lay it aside, as it was in *Homer* to make use of it.<sup>32</sup>

What the Augustans were actually insisting upon in their apologies for the implausible parts of Homer was that any departure, even in poetry, from the facts of everyday experience had to be a rational departure. If a poet seemed to write beautifully, though 'unnaturally', it must be because he was catering, rationally and deliberately, for the tastes of a credulous age, or because he was departing, rationally and deliberately, from the appearance of truth, in order to draw attention to a moral thesis.

This essay has been intended as an outline and documentation, not a critical assessment, of Augustan notions of verisimilitude in poetry. The lines a critical assessment would follow, however, are clear enough: the evasiveness of neo-classical arguments concerning the limits of 'probability', the number of special concessions that had to be made regarding Homer, Virgil and Shakespeare, and the failure of the Augustans to face up to the difference between the poetic and scientific orders of reality, to remember, that is, that the Muse of poetry was not a dyed-in-the-wool member of the Royal Society.



## In Defence of Hippocentaurs

### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Preface to *The State of Innocence and Fall of Man*, 1677.
- <sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, sig. c.
- <sup>3</sup> Preface to *The Iliad of Homer*, tr. Mr Ozell, 1712, p. iv.
- <sup>4</sup> R. Rapin, *Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie*, tr. Thos. Rymer, 1674, p. 82.
- <sup>5</sup> Preface to the Translation of Rapin's *Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie*, 1674, in J. E. Spingarn ed., *Seventeenth Century Critical Essays*, Oxford 1909, II 167, 168.
- <sup>6</sup> Charles Gildon, 'An Essay on the Art, Rise and Progress of the Stage in Greece, Rome, and England', in N. Rowe, *Works of Mr William Shakespeare*, 1709, VII viii.
- <sup>7</sup> Rymer, *op.cit.*, in Spingarn, *op.cit.*, II 171.
- <sup>8</sup> Preface to Notes and Observations on *The Empress of Morocco*, 1674, in Sir Walter Scott and George Saintsbury, *The Works of John Dryden*, 1882, XV 408.
- <sup>9</sup> *Monsieur Bossu's Treatise of the Epick Poem*, tr. P. A. Motteux, 1695, p.132.
- <sup>10</sup> Preface to *Theatrum Poetarum*, 1675, in Spingarn, *op.cit.*, II 268.
- <sup>11</sup> Sir William Davenant, *Preface to Gondibert*, 1650, in Spingarn, *op.cit.*, II 11.
- <sup>12</sup> J. Addison, *Spectator*, No. 229, 22 Nov. 1711.
- <sup>13</sup> Preface to *The Art of Painting*, by C. A. Du Fresnoy, tr. Mr Dryden, 1695, p. xxxiii.
- <sup>14</sup> *op.cit.*, pp. 32-34.
- <sup>15</sup> *Spectator*, No. 315, 1 March 1712.
- <sup>16</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup> Rapin, *op.cit.*, p. 32.
- <sup>18</sup> Preface to *The Conquest of Granada*, 1672, sig. a4.
- <sup>19</sup> 1677, sig. c.
- <sup>20</sup> Sir Richard Blackmore, Preface to *Prince Arthur*, sig. b2.
- <sup>21</sup> Preface to the Translation of *The Iliad*, 1715, in W. H. Durham ed., *Critical Essays of the Eighteenth Century (1700-1725)*, New Haven, 1915, p. 336.
- <sup>22</sup> *op.cit.*, pp. 224, 225.
- <sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 51, 52.
- <sup>24</sup> *op.cit.*, p. xiv.
- <sup>25</sup> *op.cit.*, p. li.
- <sup>26</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>27</sup> John Ozell, *The English Translator's Preface to The Iliad of Homer*, by *Madam Dacier*, 1712, sig. A9.
- <sup>28</sup> *A Prefatory Epistle concerning some Remarks to be published on Homer's Iliad*, 1714, p. 62.
- <sup>29</sup> *op.cit.*, in Durham, *op.cit.*, p. 327.
- <sup>30</sup> *Spectator*, No. 183, 29 Sept. 1711.
- <sup>31</sup> Rapin, *op.cit.*, p. 50.
- <sup>32</sup> *op.cit.*, in Durham, *op.cit.*, p. 328.

# LANDOR'S MARGINALIA TO THE *DICTIONNAIRE PHILOSOPHIQUE*

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## I

Among the many literary treasures and curiosities that have found their way to the Turnbull Library in Wellington are the six volumes of '*A Philosophical Dictionary* from the French of M. de Voltaire' published in London in 1824. These originally belonged to Charles Armitage Brown, the friend of Keats who settled and died in New Plymouth. They passed from his son Charles Brown, colonial treasurer in the first New Zealand ministry and twice superintendent of the province of Taranaki, to the Hon W. B. D. Mantell of Wellington, thence in 1892 to J. P. Maxwell from whom in 1900 they were acquired by Alexander Turnbull. In 1927 Mr Maxwell presented to the Library an original letter, now in the back of volume I, dated New Plymouth, 20 August 1892, from Charles Brown to Mantell, explaining the history of the books and their connection with Landor. Following is the relevant portion:

My dear Mantell.

When my father lent the copy you have of Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary* to Walter Savage Landor, he asked him to make marginal notes of anything that occurred to him; subsequently, Landor told my father that he had lent the work to Lady Blessington, and that she wished to keep it because it had Landor's notes in the margin, but would be happy to get Mr Brown another copy; my father replied that he valued it for the same reason, and would not part with it; Lady Blessington then made the objection that *she* had made notes in the margin, not anticipating that Mr Brown would have objected to receiving another copy for it; as my father still insisted, the work came back, and my father in a state of internal damn, set to work to obliterate the notes made by Lady Blessington, traces of which, are I believe, still to be seen . . .

In the same handwriting there is written in ink above the table of contents in Vol. I 'The marginal pencil notes were by Walter Savage Landor'.

Some at least of Lady Blessington's comments have escaped Brown's attempts to erase them, but they are of little interest for our present purpose. Those of Landor have sometimes faded to

## *Landor's Marginalia to the Dictionnaire Philosophique*

such an extent that they are difficult to decipher. In some places parts of words and occasionally whole lines have been cut off, apparently when the volumes were re-bound. In the quotations that follow, any comment that is incomplete or otherwise doubtful is indicated by an asterisk.

To help to establish the date of these jottings, as well as for other reasons, we shall have occasion to refer more than once to the dialogue entitled *The Abbé Delille and Walter Landor*. It is fairly established that Landor began working seriously on the *Imaginary Conversations* about the time of his arrival in Florence in 1821. The first two volumes appeared in March 1824 (the same year incidentally, as the *Philosophical Dictionary*), and were re-published in a second edition in 1826. But by this time the Delille-Landor dialogue had been extended, as we shall show, to include additions that clearly echo certain of Landor's marginal comments. The latter then were presumably written between 1824 and 1826. There is nothing inconsistent in this hypothesis with what we know of the two other persons connected with the early history of these interesting volumes: Charles Armitage Brown and Lady Blessington.

The former was one of Landor's oldest and most constant associates from the time when Landor lived at the Palazzo Medici. Lady Blessington visited Florence in the spring of 1826, though she did not then meet Landor. They met for the first time in June 1827. She remained in Florence, according to Landor's own statement 'all that year and nearly all the next'; but for the reasons already advanced, the volumes presumably already had the comments written in them when Landor lent them to her. One may suppose they found their way to New Zealand when Charles Armitage Brown emigrated here in 1840.

## II

It will be expedient for the purposes of comparison to try to discover Landor's opinions of France, the French and Voltaire in particular, if possible before he made his comments on the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*. One would somehow expect a man of Landor's peppery temperament to be even more anti-French than the average Englishman of his day. An incipient enthusiasm, in spite of the admonitions of the *misogallo* Alfieri, for the French Revolution ended in disillusionment when he visited Paris during the Peace of Amiens in 1802. 'Doubtless the government of Bonaparte', he wrote contemptuously of the First Consul, 'is the best that can be contrived for Frenchmen.' On the eve of his departure



for Spain in 1808 in his abortive attempt to fight the French invaders, he expressed himself in even more hostile terms: 'May every Frenchman out of France perish! . . . A detestable race, profaners of republicanism.' But Landor expressed himself with equal venom about the Florentines—('beyond all others, a treacherous, tricking, mercenary race,') to say nothing of certain of his own countrymen. The country folk in Tuscany, on the other hand, he found completely congenial, as indeed he found French market-women when he lived in Tours.

His opinions of French literature were mixed. He disliked French verse probably because he had no ear for it, but had a great admiration for certain prose writers, notably Lesage and Voltaire. His violent antipathy to Boileau's verse is well-known. It is acrimoniously expressed at provocative length in the Delille-Landor dialogue in a series of crusty comparisons to cuckoo-clocks, pump-handles and split broiled mackerel. Clearly the poor Abbé's chief function is to set up a continuous supply of Aunt Sallys, for Landor to shy at.

When he comes to discuss Voltaire, his attitude is more temperate, provided it is Voltaire's prose that is in question. (To describe Voltaire's critical opinions of poetry he maliciously quotes, or rather misquotes Chaucer: 'He hath a voice as weak as hath a gote.') Here, as is not unnatural, we find echoes of the remarks he had already scrawled in Brown's copy of the *Philosophical Dictionary*, as may be verified from a comparison of certain comments quoted below with the standard critical edition of the *Imaginary Conversations* by T. Earle Welby (Vol. VII).

Earlier in the dialogue as it now stands Landor sweepingly declares of Voltaire that 'his taste in high poetry is no better than his judgment in high philosophy'. Among the number of his futile and rash remarks, continues Landor, he declares that nothing in Homer is equivalent to Hesiod's description of Pandora . . . 'But if Voltaire could have read a sentence of Greek, even without understanding one word, the music of those verses in the *Odyssey* . . . would have checked him in the temerity of his decision'. The last sentence forms part of an addition of fifteen lines made to the second edition of 1826, and clearly reflects the comments on Voltaire's opinion on the equality of Homer and Hesiod that we shall quote later.

But in prose style, irrespective of their merits as historians, Landor awards the palm to Voltaire, in preference to Gibbon. Voltaire he says, 'is easy and animated, vigorous and supple; there is everywhere nerve enough and nowhere a superfluity of flesh. His language is always perspicuous; which cannot be said of

Gibbon's, and which is the first requisite of style.' This, too, is an afterthought, added to the third edition (1846). In a slightly different field, his encomiums of Voltaire are even more lavish: 'In the lighter touches of irony and derision, he excels Rabelais and rivals Molière.'

After these strictures and eulogies we are the more surprised to find the hard-headed Landor paying tribute to the sincerity of Voltaire's tears, and precisely in the realm of literature in which Voltaire would have been most gratified—his tragedies. It is true that the tribute is followed by a less complimentary description of the man himself, but for a moment Landor becomes sentimental over his own verse tragedy of *Count Julian* (1812). Writing to his friend Southey in 1811 he says:

'In the daytime I laboured, and at night unburdened my mind, shedding many tears. People have laughed at Voltaire for weeping at the representation of his tragedies. For my part, I believe he was never half so sincere on any other occasion. Thorough-paced rascal and true Frenchman as he was, here was neither deceit nor affectation.'

Bearing in mind this touching picture of sympathetic lachrymosity, let us now see how Voltaire fares at Landor's hands in less tragic circumstances.

### III

His remarks range from a flat contradiction of Voltaire expressed by a curt categorical 'No', through a series of ironical corrections of fact, wry, caustic comments, criticisms of the translation and verbal corrections, especially to Greek or Latin words or quotations, down to a solitary case of agreement and even one of apparent commendation. Throughout Landor's comments there is a general feeling of disagreement with Voltaire, perhaps even an over-eagerness to catch him out when he errs or appears to err. This, however, is characteristic of comments of this kind, especially when they proceed from a testy, choleric character such as Landor's.

The one case where he apparently expresses approval is the occasion where Voltaire characteristically commends cosmopolitanism (s.v. 'Country', II. 323) by quoting a fragment from the *Phaethon* of Euripides. The Greek tragedian, claims Voltaire, is the first to observe that 'every land is our country in which we dwell'.

ὡς πανταχοῦ γε πατρὶς ἡ βόσκουσα γῆ

The classical scholar first punctiliously restores the article missing from the quotation in the English edition and then adds 'Good! worthy of Voltaire'. But is this admiration or irony? The inaccuracy of the translation could hardly escape Landor's notice: 'the land that nurtures' would have been closer to the original, which contains no notion of 'dwelling'. Perhaps if Landor had seen Voltaire's translation: 'la patrie est partout où l'on se trouve bien', his comments would have been more caustic.

In several instances where Landor makes verbal corrections to classical words, it is the English publisher who is to blame, not Voltaire. For example, it was obviously Arion who was carried on the dolphin's back, not Orion (IV, 63); and the correct Latin for glass-blowers, is 'qui vitrum conflant' not 'constant' (I, 84). The use of the false form 'daimonos' in the English version provokes the pained expostulation: 'My dear Voltaire, you mean daimon' (VI, 147; also I: 157). But the original French edition has the perfectly correct form δαίμων (s.v. *Ame*).

When he corrects *Curion* to *Curio* he is consciously or unconsciously criticising the translator for not changing the form of Gallicised Latin names (III, 62). In some cases he castigates the translator openly. The word 'quaker', we are told (V, 364), 'signifies trembler'. Landor: 'An English translator should not have translated thus. He might as well have said that quaker means *quaker*.'

Elsewhere the translator comes under even heavier fire. In III, 1 the name 'Henry Stephens' arouses Landor's testy wrath: 'This is most foolish and absurd. The man's name was Henri Etienne. The translator might well have called him Harry Crown or Mademoiselle Denis Mlle. Dionysia.' 'Crown' of course is Landor's jocular translation of στέφανος, the etymon of Etienne.

Two further linguistic comments on classical words occur in the articles devoted to *Baptism* and *Confession*. 'Confession', says Voltaire, 'was not then (i.e. in the time of John the Baptist) a sacrament, because the word sacrament was at that time unknown.' 'Unknown in that sense', comments Landor captiously; 'it meant an oath in Latin.' (II, 245). Under *Baptism*, Voltaire alludes to the practice of making catechumens who officially passed over from Latin communions to the Greek say: 'I spit upon my father and my mother, who had me ill baptised.' (*mal baptiser*). This, according to Landor, 'is translated from the word according to its derivation ἀποπτύω despuo. It means "I renounce the godfather and godmother".' (I, 393).

As usual when he ventures into etymology, Voltaire lays himself wide open to attack with the words *tyrannos* and *basileus*. The



first he defines (VI, 299) in words distantly reminiscent of Tacitus succinctly describing the rise of Augustus: 'he who had contrived to draw the principal authority to himself.' About the Greek word for 'king' he likewise romances fantastically in words that again have a strong Roman savour: 'he who was charged with relating affairs to the Senate.' If Landor's comment is mild, it is because he was no etymologist either: 'Homer is the first that uses the word. In Homer (it) has no such meaning! (He) never uses *τύπῶς* . . . ?'

A few pages further on the tone of disagreement becomes more marked. The emperor Theodosius is described by Voltaire as 'a native of Spain not then civilised'. Landor: 'A mistake. Spain was as civilised as Italy and had long before sent a rhetorician to teach the Romans Latin—Quintilian, the best man that ever . . .'.\* The remainder of this comment, as well as some remarks on the Senecas, is unfortunately undecipherable. Another contradiction occurs when Voltaire, discussing Epic poetry, says that the works of Tyrtæus are lost. Landor: 'They still exist—in elegiac verse.' The contradiction overstates the case, for Tyrtæus survives only in fragments.

On the subject of epic poetry, Landor makes three remarks that differ widely in tone. The first concerns Hesiod and Homer, who, in Voltaire's opinion, appear to be 'of equal merit'. 'Voltaire', comments Landor patronisingly, 'thou art a true French critic.' (III, 98). A few pages further on, when Voltaire complains that Homer never produces tears, he explodes testily 'How the devil should he in those who can't read him!' (III, 102). But soon he is unexpectedly mollified into agreement. Voltaire suggests that it was the *Odyssey* that served as a model for the *Morgante*, the *Orlando innamorato* and the *Orlando furioso*, and expresses the opinion that 'the last of these poems is without dispute the best'—to which Landor subscribes with the laconic monosyllable 'true' (III, 104).

Classical literature also forms the background to other comments in which Landor picturesquely corrects his informant on at least three points of chronology, and on various points of fact. He contradicts Voltaire and assigns to Herodotus the priority in writing history with these tart words: 'Xenophon did not begin. Herodotus was before him and wrote better.' (II, 359).

Herodotus (along with Thucydides) is again warmly defended against Voltaire's charges of 'amplification, declamation and exaggeration' which, he asserts, 'were at all times the faults of the Greeks, excepting Demosthenes and Aristotle'. 'Fool!' rages Landor, 'What amplification is there in Thucydides? What declamation

in Herodotus? None!' (I, III). Another disparaging reference to Herodotus attributed by Voltaire to Larcher (the historian 'who was never outside the Collège Mazarin') thoroughly arouses Landor's ire: 'Larcher is a damned fool and his style is exactly the contrary of Herodotus.' (III, 5).

On two occasions Landor rises directly to the defence of Homer. 'The poems of Homer', says Voltaire, 'were long so little known that Pisistratus was the first who put them in order and had them transcribed at Athens about 500 years before the Christian era.' Landor: 'They were not little known—they were as much known before Pisistratus as after him—but corrupt or rather not reduced to order. Lycurgus had them from Crete before the time of Pisistratus.' (II, 44 s.v. *Books*). A few pages further on one almost feels that Landor's patience is running out. Voltaire (discussing buffoonery and burlesque): 'What is Homer's battle of the Frogs and mice but a piece of buffoonery—a burlesque poem?' Landor: 'Friend Voltaire! The good Homer had no more a hand in this poem than you or I.' (II, 61). Discussing the end of the world, Voltaire quotes the *Pharsalia* (VII, 812-4) and then the *Metamorphoses* (I, 256-8) of Ovid as 'following up the observation of Lucan'. 'Following up!' fumes Landor. 'He wrote the *Metamorphoses* before Lucan was born.' (III, 87). Under 'Fable' (III, 145) Voltaire commends as 'ingenious and without fault the story of the belly and the members' which calmed a tumult in Rome about 2,300 years ago. Landor: 'A mistake of about 100 years.'

Before we leave the subject of antiquity, there are two further enlightening comments to record. The first of them uses the conversation technique, of which other examples have already occurred. Voltaire refers to Egypt's population of more than 74 million inhabitants 'in a country which is not so large as Spain or France'. Landor: 'How do you know that it was not as large as Spain or France before the sands encroached on it and when Nubia was a part of it? . . .' (III, 5). The other remark, apart from the amusing tone of disapproval, has less substance in it. Under 'Eloquence' Mark Antony the orator is mentioned along with 'Hortensius, Curio, Caesar and several others'. Landor: 'The person known as Mark Antony (a mighty familiar term!) is the Triumvir. Voltaire seems to mistake him for his grandfather.' (III, 62).

Points of religion raised by the man whose cry was 'Ecrasez l'infâme' might be expected to raise interesting comments. Under the rubric *Christianity* (II, 170) Voltaire claims: 'If there be about 600 millions of men on earth, as certain learned persons pretend, the Holy Catholic church possesses scarcely 16 millions of them.'

about a 26th part of the inhabitants of the known world.' Landor: 'What enormous miscalculation! The earth contains about 1000 million (sic) of inhabitants—Europe alone 80 millions of Catholics and more.' This comment is followed by some arithmetical jottings: France 29m., Spain and Portugal 16, Germany and Hungary 18, Poland 6. A little further on (II, 214) Voltaire discussing the predominance of the Church of England claims that as church membership was necessary to hold office, 'not a 20th part of the nation was outside the bosom of the dominant church'. Landor: 'At present in Great Britain and Ireland the established Church has a very small majority. In Ireland there are 6 to 1 against it—in England not 3 to 1 for it.' This seems to be anticipating his arguments for the disestablishment of the Church of England contained in his *Letters of a Conservative* of 1836.

It is curious to note that when Landor might have commented on Voltaire's hard-worked topic of fanaticism, he passes the word over to comment on atheism. 'Atheism', says Voltaire 'does not oppose crime, but fanaticism prompts to its commission.' Landor: 'Maybe, but atheism gives crime up to the laws and to the contempt of honest men.' Another opportunity occurs in III, 169 (s.v. fanaticism). Voltaire, again venturing into etymology, writes 'Fanaticus was an honorable designation. It signified minister or benefactor of a temple.' He then proceeds to quote Cicero speaking against Clodius (*Pro domo sua*, XL) and calling him 'homo fanaticus'. Landor: 'Cicero keeps up the irony by calling him a zealot.'

It would be merely tiresome to comment *in extenso* on all of Landor's notes. They tell us, in fact, nothing new about either Landor or Voltaire. Enough have been quoted to show that Landor's reading of the *Philosophical Dictionary* was not quite without effect on the *Imaginary Conversations*. But they are mainly of interest in showing two completely different minds and tempers meeting momentarily as it were on common ground. Voltaire's malicious, nimble wit and his genius for vulgarisation, with all its accompanying tendentious overtones, come solidly up against Landor's sounder scholarship, the curled lip of limited literary admiration contending with personal scorn and dislike in a way that adds point to Byron's quip about Walter Savage Landor's 'grim cognomen'. In these encounters Landor possesses the inestimable advantage of having the last word; but it is tempting to speculate what would have been the outcome if the two interlocutors had ever met personally in some Johnsonian drawing-room.

For a final example, let us refer to the famous question of the beds of shells. In the *Dictionnaire philosophique*, Voltaire ranges the topic under the rubric Ignorance (IV, 107). Landor's comment



is unexpectedly calm and serious: 'This is the greatest error in all the works of Voltaire. Beds of shells do exist on ground more elevated than Touraine . . .'\* This brings us back to the Delille and Landor dialogue and the author's opinion of Voltaire as a creative writer and his lack of 'vigour of conception'. In discussing this characteristic with reference to the existence of beds of shells Landor himself seems to have forgotten his usual testiness, and very curiously ends on a note of characteristically Voltairian *malice*: 'He could not imagine that the earth had ever been covered by the sea, but that the shells on mountains were tossed there by Nature in her hours of idleness, to excite, no doubt, the curiosity of English travellers.'

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## TWO CRISES IN HORACE'S POETICAL CAREER

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Horace and Virgil are the first Roman poets we know much about. They are, moreover, well-represented by their works. The order and dates of composition of these are in general agreed upon. The age in which they lived is the best-documented in antiquity. The temptation is strong, therefore, to reconstruct their development as literary artists, and the justification greater than with any of the half-dozen major Roman poets who were their predecessors or their contemporaries. Virgil offers a pretty straightforward gradation from minor enterprise to major. Some have tried to force Horace into a similar, simple pattern, even if this meant setting the commonplace perfection of the Epistles above the great experiment of the Odes. The true pattern is, beyond doubt, more complex, and (for Horace is a more highly personal poet than Virgil) more interesting, and more important.

Many have felt Horace a cold-blooded poet, and given their reasons. The variety of styles his verse embraces should, perhaps, be viewed with this in mind—as evidence not simply of increasing maturity and ability, but of deliberate experiment, consciously directed towards the goal of poetic success.

The story of Horace's verse begins somewhat fitfully a little after 40 B.C. when Horace was in his late twenties; passes on to the comparatively late genesis of his real poetry, round his thirty-fifth year; is abruptly interrupted thirteen years later; then resumes,

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in a brief Indian summer, with the fourth book of *Odes*, until Horace's final abandonment of verse in his early fifties, about five years before he died, a few days short of his fifty-seventh birthday. There are two turning-points, or crises, in his poetical career which seem particularly revealing.

The story falls into clearly-defined episodes. The first ends about 30 B.C., or a little after the battle of Actium. Actium is more than a convenient historical landmark: there follows Actium a new intellectual climate in Rome, to which Horace was clearly sensitive, and we find the character of his work changing abruptly. The biographical facts of this first episode are well known and we have a good deal about it in the *Satires* from Horace himself. Let us concentrate our attention on what Horace achieved in verse in these eight years.

He had been writing in two styles. His principal output (the two books of the *Satires*) was in low-style hexameter verse, verse that borders on conversation. That in itself need not deny it poetic status, as the conversational manner of much of the very authentic poetry of Catullus shows. But, whether satirical (in the modern sense of the word), dramatic or argumentative (and there is a good deal of experiment over the two books), the *Satires* are irredeemably prose in their matter. Horace himself specifically denies any aspiration to real poetry in them:

primum ego me illorum, dederim quibus esse poetas  
excerpam numero: neque enim concludere uersus  
dixeris esse satis; neque si qui scribat uti nos  
sermoni propiora, putes hunc esse poetam.  
ingenium cui sit, cui mens diuinior atque os  
magna sonaturum, des nominis huius honorem.

(*Satires*, I, 4, 39-44)

This is a part-time occupation, Horace says later in the same satire (lines 138 f.), and not one he takes seriously. Part-time or not, it produced over 2,100 hexameter lines. After 30 B.C. Horace abandoned this medium for ten years.

The *Epodes* are rather different. First of all in bulk: there are only 625 lines of them (many iambic dimeters and other short lines)—much the same number as the smallest book of *Odes* (Book IV, 582 lines). There are reasons for suspecting both volumes were scraped together. The tone of the *Epodes* is higher poetically, though often morally lower: Epode 8, for example, is not a bad piece of real verse—as opposed to versified prose. There is a good deal of experiment in the poetic level of the subject matter (ranging from the trivial, e.g. Epode 3, which it is charitable to think of as

very early, to the elevated, e.g. Epode 16); though the quality of the poetry is on the whole (with four exceptions) not really high. Comparing the *Epodes* with the *Satires* (Horace seems to have started writing in both styles about the same time and to have written in both contemporaneously) it seems a reasonable inference that Horace kept the Epode-style for writing he intended to be taken more seriously.

But there is evidence in the *Epodes* that Horace's abilities, and perhaps his ambitions, were, round 30 B.C., outrunning this medium, too. The first ten Epodes have all the same metre. In the seven pieces 11-17, six new metres are attempted. Three of the seven show no new trend in Horace's poetry (except 17, which is either an isolated experiment or a fill-up and there would appear here no reason—apart from that of arrangement—for supposing 11-17 later than 1-10. The other four (11, 13, 14 and 15) are not only very different in general style from 1-10, but also poetically so much more mature that they give every sign of being the latest work in the book. It has been remarked that these four Epodes have more the character of Odes, and it is usual to speak of a progressive evolution from early Epodes to Odes. I think this misleading. The evidence is more for an abrupt transition, begun before the Epodes had reached the dimensions of an ancient book, from low-style to high-style poetry. These four pieces in Horace's new style are not the over-lapping pieces in a continuous evolution, but Horace's first attempts in a new and distinct style of writing, included with the Epodes to bring that collection up in bulk to something like the minimum dimensions for an ancient book. The juxtaposition of three texts seems to me to justify this inference and also to make it clear the decision to write high-style poetry cost Horace much effort.

In Epodes 11 and 14 we hear of something we have not heard of before in Horace, something which, if modern students did not usually come to Horace first through the Odes, instead of reading him chronologically, might cause more surprise: Horace is in love.<sup>1</sup>

Petti. nihil me sicut antea iuuat

scribere uersiculos amore percussum graui

(*Epode 11, 1-2*)

It is not the first time. Horace claims: the last occasion was two years before. Despite the claim, this is the first time we find Horace attempting serious love poetry. In Epode 14, he says he is so much in love he cannot bring himself to write. Again there is serious treatment of love by a poet who had hitherto reserved for love either derision or abuse (*Satires* 1, 2, 11, 7, 46-52; *Epodes* 5; 8;



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12; 17). In both Epodes, Horace claims that love—unrequited love, to be precise—takes away his taste for writing. The idea that the onset of love interferes with all else is a familiar and old theme in ancient poetry which Mlle A. Guillemin has traced back as far as Sappho (*Sur les origines de l'élégie latine*, REL 1939, 282-292). We might take Horace's statements at their face value. It is, however, a little late in the tradition of this poetic cliché for us not to be suspicious, and more realistic, perhaps, to interpret Horace's statement as equivalent to, 'I am now aspiring to write the kind of poetry where poets say this sort of thing', i.e., that he is experimenting with a stock situation. The editors of Horace are not usually so explicit, though this interpretation would not, I think, be strongly contested, in consequence of the view (usually taken) that Horace's love-life is largely fancy.

There is also in these passages, particularly the second, what really looks like a genuine excuse to Maecenas for not getting on with his book of Epodes. If these passages represent Horace's earliest, deliberate experiment with serious poetry, Horace found perhaps the conventional cliché of poetical inspiration suspended by love a convenient pose to cover the very real difficulty he was experiencing in writing poetry that gave him artistic satisfaction. While posing as the languid lover who cannot bring pen to paper, he was trying his hardest to write good high poetry. This view is supported by the opening lines of *Satires* II, 3. Horace represents himself as accused by a friend, Damasippus, of writing little, and pulling to pieces again (*scriptorum quaeque retexens*) the little he does write. It is again suggested (by one who is obviously delineated as an unsympathetic critic) that Horace is lazy (compare *uini somnique benignus* and *desidia* with the opening of Epode 14). The general tone of the passage, particularly 8ff., suggests it is not satire that Damasippus is referring to. Words like *canas*, *poetis* suggest this, as does line 9 (*nil dignum sermone*, as Gow points out is a Grecism—'nothing worth talking about'). Also perhaps the comic poets (probably including Plato): the dependence of Roman love poetry on comedy has been demonstrated by Wheeler and others. I suggest it is not Epodes either, at any rate of the usual kind, but attempts at the real poetry of inspiration that Horace a few years before had so sharply distinguished from satire (*Satires* I 4 39 ff., cited above).

These texts, set against the background of the abrupt change that took place round this time in the whole form and tone of Horace's work, are perhaps enough to suggest a kind of poetic crisis in Horace's life, a transition to serious poetry that was deliberate and difficult, a period of frustration which Horace tried

to pass off to some extent with the stock excuse of being in love.

The crisis was resolved by filling out the book of Epodes with four poems of a very different kind, two of them (13 and 15) of real poetic worth. Horace then concentrated during this second period (ending in 23 B.C., the usually-accepted date for the publication of *Odes I-III*) on serious poetry.

With assessing the character and quality of the *Odes* we need not now concern ourselves. A few judgments may, however, be permitted to throw light on the genesis of the poems. Their deliberate, unspontaneous character (Petronius' famous *curiosa felicitas*) is consistent with the picture of Horace as a poet who, though a great artist, had to try very hard; their grandiloquent tone is a little the tone of a poet who still has the non-poet's view that poetry must possess the *os magna sonaturum*—'lips that speak in high-sounding phrase';<sup>2</sup> above all, there is the lack of evident, compulsive inspiration, and the frequent lapse into Horace's old vice (in the Satires) of smug moralizing.

It is extremely interesting, too, to notice that Horace once again, as soon as he had found his feet in this new medium and on this new level, stood aside from existing verse forms. This is in Horace a recurring pattern. He tells us (*Satires I, 10, 46 f.*) that he originally chose satire as a medium where he need not fear competition from contemporaries. Again, though one or two Epodes (e.g., 8 or 10) resemble stylistically, in their urbanely savage invective, similar pieces in Catullus. Horace's manner, though varied, quickly becomes individual. Moreover, from the beginning Horace had clearly avoided existing genres—epic, tragedy, or (more surprising in him who was to become the love poet of the *Odes*) the style of Catullus and his successors, or the new style of Gallus and Propertius.

Horace's innovations all involve a kind of revival; of the second-century Roman Lucilius in the Satires; of the eighth-century Greek Archilochus in the Epodes. Years later, he insisted his indebtedness to Archilochus was a formal one:

Parios ego primus iambos  
ostendi Latio, numeros animosque secutus  
Archilochi, non res at agentia uerba Lycamben.

(*Epistles, I, 19, 23ff*)

That is, he borrowed the verse and the manner, not the subject matter, and was the first to do so. His claims are not rejected by scholars. On the metre Kiessling-Heinze, *Horaz*, 8th ed. 1954, p. 485-6 says 'Archilochos' epodische . . . Komposition . . . war den Römern bis dahin, so viel wir wissen, ganz fremd geblieben.'

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For the manner, see Lasserre, *Les épodes d'Archiloque*, 1950. According to Lasserre (see e.g. chap. VI and pp. 274 ff.), the imitation was sometimes close. This rejection of current fashions need only have been modesty in a beginner. When Horace continues it in the Odes it looks like something more. At the end of the three books of the Odes, Horace claims originality (as he was to do for his earlier 'introduction' to Rome of Archilochean metres in the Epodes):

Dicar . . .

princeps Aeolium carmen ad Italos  
deduxisse modos.

(*Odes*, III, 30, 10-14)

'It will be said I introduced Aeolian poetry to Italian verse.' Let us examine this claim. Of the eighty-eight poems of this first collection, fifty-five are written in the distinctive Alcaic and Sapphic metres. Three are written in metres with which we associate the name of Archilochus, and, significantly, if Pasquali is right, these are early odes (*Orazio lirico*, 1920, p. 712 ff. Horace himself implies a transitional imitation of Archilochus in his list of old Greek poets, *Epistles* I, 19, 28 ff.).

A further twenty-seven Odes are written in Asclepiads, metres used by Sappho and Alcaeus, but also in Hellenistic time by Asclepiades, whose name we now attach to the metre.<sup>3</sup> Our ignorance of Hellenistic poetry is so great we cannot be certain to what extent any ancient lyric metre was used in Hellenistic times, but it does not seem unlikely that the employment of the characteristic Sapphics and Alcaics may have been confined for some 600 years prior to Horace's day to occasional *tours de force*. A great deal is sometimes made of one poem of Catullus in Sapphics (a translation of Sappho) and a fragment of a second. But an occasional piece is not enough to make Horace's claim false—if he *meant* only to claim the introduction of new metres. It is more likely that he attempted once again (as in the Epodes) to follow the manner as well as the metre of his original. Pasquali tries to show that in, at any rate, some of the Odes Horace attempted to set out from an Alcaic setting and write poetry, after the manner of the ancient Greek poet, but in a style that was at the same time distinctively contemporary and characteristically Roman, and it may very well be that it is in this larger sense that Horace claims to have 'introduced Aeolian poetry to Italian verse'. He was after all trying to write poetry, not a series of literary pastiches. But if in the Odes Horace did again what he had already done in the Epodes, this device became integrated in the Odes with a deliber-



ate plan of turning his back on contemporary poetry. He had early formed friendships with what may be called the 'Romanizing' school in Roman poetry: Virgil, Varius Rufus and others of the circle of Maecenas, as opposed to the Hellenistic school of Catullus and his successors and the new Hellenizing school of Gallus and Propertius. His works are sprinkled with friendly references to the Romanizing school. Towards the Catullans there is no expression of sympathy, and one remark that seems pejorative. There is no mention by name at all of Gallus or Propertius (nor does Propertius mention Horace). Some see here only personal friendships and enmities. On the strength of the one reference to Catullus (*Satires*, I, 10, 19) and on possible identifications of persons unsympathetically drawn by Horace with Propertius (*Satires* I, 9; *Epistles* II, 2 90-101), there has been built up a tradition of personal dislike. This may be right. The question was examined by Rand. *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 1907, who rejected, not very convincingly, the theory of an enmity between Horace and the Catullans. But, if they are right who argue for this enmity, I think they put the cart before the horse. The disagreement is a literary one, rather than one of personalities, or even jealousies. Horace had early the good sense to feel that the pro-Hellenistic movement in Roman poetry which had started with Catullus and which was being continued by Gallus and Propertius had exhausted its inspiration, and that the time was ripe for a new orientation.<sup>4</sup> This is not, of course, to argue that Horace is free from Hellenistic influence, but that he tried to reduce its influence on his poetry. If there were no first rank poets to continue in the new more strongly nationalistic direction, supported by fresh inspiration from the literature of *old Greece*—from a period antedating by a century the beginnings of the Roman Republic—that was the disaster of Roman poetry in the early Empire, rather than the fault of Horace.

It is perhaps not unfair to suggest that Horace's artistic intuition was reinforced by a sense of political opportuneness, that he saw in the political collapse of Greek Egypt after the Battle of Actium the symbol of the collapse of Hellenistic literature along with the collapse of its capital. Here is, perhaps, the key to the much-debated lines with which the final ode of Book III begins:

Exegi monumentum aere perennius,  
regalique situ pyramidum altius.

'The monument I have completed will outlive one of bronze; it stands higher than the decaying pyramids of kings.' As constantly in Horace a Roman image (the bronze monument) is coupled with

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a Greek one. The pyramids, of course, have nothing to do with the Greek kings of Egypt. But would that prevent any Roman in the decade following Actium from accepting them as a poetic symbol not only of the regime of Cleopatra, but of a whole civilisation overthrown?<sup>5</sup>

The first three books of the *Odes* were completed by 23 B.C. The last fifteen years of the poet's are an odd anti-climax. A second crisis in his poetical career seems to have followed the publication of *Odes I-II*. As abruptly he had taken up serious poetry he now went back to the moralizing hexameter verse of the first episode of his career. This is the sort of thing that happens to a poet when inspiration fails, and he has the sense to realize it. Horace was, perhaps, in the even more hopeless position of a poet to whom inspiration had never really come. For seven or eight years he had written poetry according to a carefully worked-out formula that guaranteed originality of treatment, formal perfection, and—given talent and effort—success. But to a writer whose standards were high and whose judgment was acute, a good deal, probably, of the three books of *Odes* fell short of the intended goal. The point comes where the game ceases to be worth the candle, and, with reputation won, Horace could not, one feels, bring himself to continue. Within a year or so we find him talking of the writing of poetry with positive distaste.

In his first epistle he says to Maecenas, who seems (as in Epode 14, a decade previously) to be urging him to continue writing: 'I am no longer of the age for verse, nor have I any longer the heart for it':

non eadem est aetas, non mens,

(*Epistles I, I, 4*)

and, a few lines later:

nunc itaque et uersus et cetera ludicra pono.

In *Epistles II, 2, 55 ff.* (written 20-17 B.C.), he expresses himself even more strongly:

singula de nobis anni praedantur euntes.

eripuerunt iocos, Venerem, conuiuia, ludum,

tendunt extorquere poemata, quid faciam uis?

The word *poemata* and the whole tone of the passage suggest it is his serious poetry, the poetry of the *Odes*, that Horace is talking of. As in the first crisis Horace is not entirely frank and dignifies his motives with a façade, this time of preoccupation with the more serious things in life, to which he opposes not only poetry but verse of all kinds. But it is hard to write these passages off as no more than the justifiable pose of a man in his middle forties.

Add to them the eighth Epistle of the first book, where Horace accuses himself of inconsistency and discontentment in terms that transcend polite self-accusation. Add again the strangely violent lines

sed quod non sit habentem  
quae poterunt umquam satis expurgare cicutae  
ni melius dormire putem quam scribere uersus?  
(*Epistles II, 2, 52 ff.*)

It is hard to argue these are not signs of the effort it had cost Horace to be a poet.

He was allowed, however, to escape from serious poetry into writing verse epistles: he who had made himself the court poet was prevailed upon at the age of 52 to publish a short fourth book of Odes, as small as he could decently make it, containing perhaps material long rejected. Rand, *loc. cit.* suggests this of *Odes IV, 12*. The banter addressed to a youthful Virgil in an Ode published after Virgil's death, has led critics, who seem to have overlooked Rand's suggestion, into supposing Horace must have meant another Virgil. But when we look back over the 88 odes of the first three books, and observe how few are really at all spontaneous or lyrical in tone, and how many closer to the pedestrian moralizing Horace of the Satires and Epistles—how many in fact (particularly in the rather dull second book) are only Satires and Epistles done into lyric metres, we can feel that Horace's poetic career continued, as long as it lasted, to make demands upon him that he found it increasingly intolerable to measure up to.

Horace was a literary artist whose standards transcended his capabilities. This unbalance provoked two crises. The first led him in his early thirties to throw over verse forms his standards had outgrown. The second led him in his early forties to reject a style in poetry written to a formula that could command success, and almost dispense with genius, because it could not continue to dispense with inspiration.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> I cannot be concerned here with the argument, old in poetry, whether Horace writes of personal experience or of poetic fiction. This question has been well aired for Roman poetry by A. W. Allen, 'Sincerity and The Roman Elegists', CP 1950 145 f.

<sup>2</sup> Genius and prejudice are so often inter-woven; this is another point where Horace's natural tendencies were, I think, reinforced by a desire to make a break with the Catullans!

<sup>3</sup> 'De bonne heure ils (les asclépiadéens) se rencontrent dans la poésie lyrique monodique (Sappho, Alcée) et dans la poésie lyrique des chœurs . . . D'après Héphéstien le troisième livre de Sappho était écrit entièrement en asclépiadéens majeurs.' Koster, *Traité de métrique* 1953, 243 f.



<sup>4</sup> Mlle Guillemin, REL 1950 182 ff. has suggested the difficulty Propertius experienced in writing real poetry as a disciple of Catullus.

<sup>5</sup> Heinze in his last edition maintained the neutral meaning 'situation' for *situs*, assuming Horace merely meant the pyramids as something long-lasting, and failing to understand why he should then emphasize the decay of his symbol of permanence. Simonides 5D., quoted by Tescari (pointing out that *situs* = εὔρωσ) argues against Heinze, independently of the added significance suggested above.

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## 'VON GOTT HAT MAN NIE FERIE' ERNST WIECHERT AND THE CRISIS OF FAITH

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All aspects of Wiechert's work have met with widely differing responses and interpretations, and this is in itself an indication of this author's enigmatic and often ambivalent attitude to the problems with which he deals throughout his work. He has frequently been charged with 'escapism', and this charge has been refuted. His political views have been called into question and his political courage widely extolled. Even his mastery of language has aroused unfavourable comment in certain respects.<sup>1</sup> The difference of opinion amongst critics is nowhere more evident than in discussion of his religious outlook. He has been quoted as 'ein Zeugnis für die Bibel'<sup>2</sup> and has been pronounced to be not a Christian;<sup>3</sup> some critics have emphasized his religious mysticism, others have drawn attention to his misleading and unjustified use of Biblical language. This essay attempts to show that Wiechert was a deeply religious man, who suffered intensely from his loss of faith not only in Christianity, but in the very existence of God, and who was haunted and tormented to the end by regret for that which was lost.

Wiechert's struggle with the angel can be seen in various stages of development throughout his work, and it will be well to give a résumé of this development before attempting a detailed analysis of his final position. The problem first comes into prominence in the novel *Der Totenwolf* (1924), which contains a violent denunciation of Christianity in Nietzschean terms and at times in Nietzschean phraseology. The religion of humility and pity is held to be responsible for the decay of the true German spirit. The fanatical hero, Wolf Wiedensahl, puts the issue bluntly; 'Sollen wir ein christliches Volk sein, Herr Pfarrer, oder ein

deutsches Volk? Ein leidendes, demütiges, oder ein kämpfendes, stolzes?' Behind the hysterical tone in which the creed of defiance and destruction is proclaimed, one hears again and again the voice of Zarathustra:

Das alte Haus, das Haus aus Stein und Eisen, das würde in Trümmer sinken, und unter sich würde es begraben die Götzen des Stoffes, die Tafeln des Glücks, die Altäre der Demut, die Lehre vom Jammertal, und mit dem allen die Kranken und Müden, die Feigen und Gierigen, die Verderber der deutschen Seele.

Wiechert's anti-Christian position is quite plain here, but it is unfair and unnecessary to lay undue stress on a work which Wiechert later denounced as a 'paroxysm' and 'so von innen heraus unwahr.' He used the same word to describe his next novel, *Der Knecht Gottes Andreas Nyland* (1926), but added that the paroxysm of action had given place here to a paroxysm of suffering. The hysterical note still prevails, and although Nietzsche's influence has largely been replaced by that of the early Rilke, there is a great affinity between these apparently so dissimilar novels. Andreas Nyland's search for God in the world is accompanied by a frantic desire to take upon himself all the sufferings of mankind, and in this veritable orgy of self-sacrifice is revealed the same fanaticism which inspired the hero of the *Totenwolf*, Wiechert later recognised the pathological nature of his 'God-seeking' in this work, and wrote:

Auch war es ja vom tätigen Christentum weit entfernt und viel mehr eine leidenschaftliche Anklage gegen seine Verflachung und Entartung als eine Lobpreisung.<sup>5</sup>

In the character of Pastor Reimarus however we have the first sketch of a type which recurs constantly in Wiechert's mature work, the prototype of Agricola in *Die Jerominkinder* and of Wittkopp in *Missa sine Nomine*. In spite of differences of emphasis, these three figures all represent the priest who has struggled passionately to achieve faith, and who has been defeated in the struggle. Reimarus is a figure which never entirely disappears from Wiechert's subsequent works, but Nyland himself marks a unique stage in the development of the author's views on religion. This novel has been generally accepted as marking the end of Wiechert's Sturm und Drang period, and Wiechert confirms this view when he tells us of the spiritual crisis through which he passed at this time:

Ich war vierzig Jahre alt, als 'der Durchbruch der Gnade' über

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mich kam, und die alte Form zerbrach. Er spülte den Hass hinweg und liess mich in der Liebe. Er spülte das Gesetz hinweg, in dem ich aufgewachsen war, die Sicherheit, die Tradition, und liess mich an der Schwelle eines neuen Anfangs. Und von hier aus baue ich mein zweites Haus. Ein Haus für die 'Erniedrigten und Beleidigten'. Die Tiere gehören dazu, die Kinder, die Armen, die Misshandelten, die Entrechteten.

This suggests a more positive approach to the problem, but in fact leads to its temporary neglect. In the works which follow, the collections of Novellen, *Der silberne Wagen* (1928) and *Die Flöte des Pan* (1930), and the two novels, *Die Magd des Jürgen Daskocil* (1932) and *Die Majorin* (1934), the predominant note is one of pity and sympathy for human suffering, which is unrelated to the problem of faith. There are two exceptions to this general statement, the Novellen *Der Hauptmann von Kapernaum* (1930) and *Tobias* (written in 1933), in both of which the vital experience is a crisis of faith with positive results for the hero's development. In the novels, too, the inadequacy of the convention-bound orthodox priest is stressed, but rather as an aside to the main theme of the efficacy of a purely human sympathy. The voice of violent denial and anguished doubt is momentarily silent. Only momentarily however, for in the next novel, *Das einfache Leben* (1938-39), Wiechert returns to the problem of faith. The protagonist in the argument here is the retired naval officer, von Orla, whose retreat from the world to the isolation of his island in a remote East Prussian lake is the outward and visible sign of an inward retreat from the insoluble question of the existence of a divine order in the world. Orla's final position is one of resigned denial; the struggle for faith is abandoned and the attempt is to be made to interpret the world without reference to the love of God. Thomas von Orla no longer wishes to see God face to face, as Nyland and Reimarus had desired. The law he discovers in the universe has neither human features nor divine, and moreover has nothing to do with moral judgments. Ebeling points out that this is a poetic transcription of Schopenhauer, combined with the 'pre-Christian' fatalism of the Russians and Scandinavians.<sup>6</sup>

The question had to be asked again in *Buchenwald*, and no other answer could be expected in such circumstances than that which had already been given: there is simply no evidence in the world of the existence of a loving God, and consequently we must live without reference to anything higher than the supreme human virtues of sympathy and loving-kindness.

Wenn Gottes Erbarmen geringer war als menschliches Erbar-



men, dann war dies alles ein Trugbild, auf einen Kinderhimmel gemalt, und wo der Kinderhimmel zerbrach, zerbrach auch das Trugbild.<sup>7</sup>

In the horror of the concentration camp, however, man is dependent entirely on 'menschliches Erbarmen', for God is dead.

Nein, kein Vater mehr, hoch über Sternen und den goldenen Wolken. Kein Vater, sondern das versteinerte Gesicht des Brudermörders Kain, der auf den Weltenthron gestiegen war, um den Rauch der Opfer einzuatmen.<sup>8</sup>

*Der Totenwald* could hardly be expected to present Wiechert's final viewpoint; time was needed to lessen the immediate impact of evil, and this process was only completed—if indeed it ever was—in the last two novels of Wiechert, *Die Jerominkinder* (1945-1947) and *Missa sine Nomine* (1950). The resignation and denial of faith of *Das einfache Leben* reappears in the first of these novels, where it is expressed by Jons Ehrenreich and several of his mentors. This outlook is presented as heroic, if not optimistic, but its quiet acceptance by the hero in the second volume is almost lost in the violent cry of despairing unbelief which gives the key-note of the first. With the pastor Agricola, Wiechert reaches his furthest point in forthright blasphemy, and it is quite understandable that this part of the book should have hurt and offended many sincere Christians. In the otherwise calm and impersonal 'theologische Besinnung' of Heinrich Fries, discussion of this part of Wiechert's work produces a note of personal sorrow evident in his condemnation of this 'Rückfall in die dunkelsten Formen eines unerlösten Heidentums' on the part of a writer, who was himself a Christian, who knows the Bible, and who apparently speaks in the name of truth and logical thinking.<sup>9</sup>

Fries deals from a theological standpoint with the main charges which Wiechert levels against religion in this work, some of them recapitulations of the views of *Das einfache Leben*, others surpassing in passionate denunciation anything that had previously appeared even in *Der Totenwolf*. The inefficacy of faith is demonstrated in its inability to bring comfort in a world of hunger and want, and when the basic human needs are left unsatisfied, then faith is merely a 'Versprechen, das so leicht zu geben und so unmöglich zu prüfen war, einen Wechsel auf eine bessere Welt, der so leicht zu unterschreiben war und von dem niemand wusste, ob er jemals eingelöst werden würde.'<sup>10</sup> In face of the evil in the world, Agricola reverts to an old argument: either God is powerless to avert it, in which case He does not exist as God, or else God is responsible for the existence of evil, and consequently when

children die in an epidemic, God is guilty of infanticide. 'Komm her, du Kindermörder!' With the death of Agricola, these excesses disappear, but the basic disbelief remains. Jons, the central character of the second part, organises his life on the conviction that it is better to accept the world as being without the love of God, and to substitute for this dream the active human loving-kindness expressed in Jons' work as village doctor.

Of Agricola's spiritual torment, it had been said in the *Jerominkinder*: 'so leicht ist es nicht, ihn auszulöschen,' and in Wiechert's last novel, *Missa sine Nomine*, it is clear that Wiechert too could not eradicate the idea of God. Nowhere is the author more manifestly haunted by nostalgic regret for the lost dream, and this book could well be defined as Wiechert's attempt to preserve the legend he had previously rejected. Although in Wittkopp we again meet a priest who has lost faith, although the emphasis is still on the salvation to be found in human activity, the atmosphere is one of resigned waiting rather than of final denial. The book ends with a passage sustained by a note of reconciliation, and in which the possibility even of a rebirth of faith is not excluded:

Vor dem roten Schein stand nun der verlassene Mann Done-laitis, wie er an den meisten Abenden zu stehen pflegte, unbeweglich, als reichten seine Wurzeln in die dunkle Erde. Das Abendrot umfing ihn, wie es die Büsche und Bäume umfing. Er stand ohne eine Gebärde da, und man wusste nicht einmal, ob er die Augen geschlossen hatte. Aber man meinte zu wissen, dass er etwas sah hinter dem grossen Feuer des Himmels, ja, - - - - - noch hinter fernen Strömen der fernen Heimat etwas sah, was sich nun Abend für Abend immer mehr vor ihm aufgeschlossen hatte. Und vielleicht konnte man es die Unvergänglichkeit des Lebens nennen. - - - - - Er benannte es nicht so, und seine Lippen formten kein Wort dafür. Aber sein Herz schlug ihm so still und gewiss, als wenn er es so benennen könnte.

Admittedly we are here presented with nothing more than an emotionally charged mood of receptivity, and yet Wiechert is obviously trying consciously to produce the atmosphere of peace expressed in the 'Nunc dimittis'. It is possible to infer from this ending and the intentional mysticism of the title that Wiechert was at any rate seeking to arrive at a position of acceptance, and to silence the voice of rejection. However cruelly life may make a mockery of faith, the inherent beauty and the power of solace in the message of the Bible—both received emotionally—finally prove

to be attractions too strong to be resisted. Such a position may be reached through resignation, but may also contain an element of despair. It may be that we have here an example of Nietzsche's interpretation of Apollonian art, however remote Wiechert might be stylistically from such a conception.—that the novelist can only make his tragic vision of life tolerable by erecting a protective legend which beautifies and disguises.

From Wiechert's work it is easy to realise that certain personal experiences account for the collapse of faith. The earliest was the bitter disillusionment at the sham, hollow forms of civilisation which he encountered after the first European war. His attacks on this sham in *Der Totenwolf*, *Andreas Nyland*, and *Das einfache Leben* for instance include also an attack on the insufficiency of a conventionalized religion. The church for him is an integral part of those forces which tend to increase the rottenness of our modern civilisation by covering it with a veneer of orthodox insincerity. This attitude is already expressed in reference to the pre-1914 era in his account of his boyhood in *Wälder und Menschen*. The war then gave a further and even more violent shock to his predisposition to faith. The frequent recurrence of the 'Heimkehrer' theme is sufficient evidence of the intensity of this shock, which it took Wiechert a very long time to get into proportion. Only in the Novelle *Der Kinderkreuzzug* (1928) do we read: ' - - - dass die Jahre des Krieges nicht den höchsten Gipfel der Welle bilden konnten, zu der sein Leben sich erhoben hatte.' And even then, the figure which represents most completely the confusion of mind of the returned soldier, Michael Fahrenholz, does not occur until the appearance of *Die Majorin* in 1934. The novels of the 1930's do show a gradual lessening of the impact of the war on Wiechert's views. His preoccupation with the problem of suffering in a divinely-ordered world received however a further impetus from his experiences in Buchenwald, and it is understandable that his immediate subsequent development should be an even sharper rejection of faith. Wiechert had always been obsessed with the problem of evil, but that he had at first little understanding of its true nature, is shown by the unreal, nightmare figures which represent evil in his early works—the Zerrgiebels in the *Passion*, Kascheike in *Andreas Nyland*, the Mormon priest Maclean in *Die Magd des Jürgen Doskocil*. His personal experience of evil, however, whilst causing these caricatures to disappear, adds yet another charge against God. Evil is now recognised as something too elemental, and too deeply rooted in the universe to be portrayed by abnormal ogres; it is shown instead as part of the creation, for which the creator and not the creature must bear the responsibility.



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These experiences of a decadent civilisation, war and concentration camp, are the external shocks which produced in Wiechert the crisis of faith. There seemed to be a possibility that this crisis would be surmounted after the experience he describes as 'Durchbruch der Gnade', but the works written after his imprisonment in Buchenwald (beginning with *Das einfache Leben*) show clearly that the old doubts had been reawakened, and their validity confirmed. The main headings under which these doubts and Wiechert's lack of faith can be summarised have been given by H. Fries in his *Theologische Besinnung*. Firstly Wiechert calls into question the love of God. Fries illustrates this by reference to Orla's book in *Das einfache Leben* which is entitled *Der Schlachtengott, oder Gottes zweifelhafte Haltung bei Seegefechten*, but the point is developed much more closely in the conversation between Orla and the General. Here Orla explains that he can no longer accept the idea of God's loving-kindness, since this God has watched in cruel silence the massacre of war :

Ein Volk, das zwei Millionen Tote hingegeben hat, kann vielleicht das Recht haben, Gott zu fragen, was er sich dabei gedacht habe. Und wenn er nicht antwortet, braucht es vielleicht nicht mit dem zufrieden zu sein, was die Kirche sagt. Denn die Kirche hat zu denen, die in diesen Jahren geopfert haben, nicht immer das Richtige gesagt. Wenn aber Gott nicht antwortet, auf diese zwei Millionen nicht und auf die Millionen auch nicht, die man hinterher umgebracht hat, und auf die Kinder ebensowenig, die verhungert und erschlagen an den Landstrassen liegen; wenn er nicht nur nicht antwortet sondern es so aussieht, als würde er, nach zwanzig oder zweihundert Millionen ebensowenig antworten, ein stummer Gott, eisig vor Gleichgültigkeit, wie ein furchtbarer Lehrer vor hilflosen, weinenden Kindern; dann, Herr General, könnte es sein, dass es hier und da einem zuviel wird, vor der Steinwand zu knien und als Antwort das Echo zu bekommen. Dass er sich fragt, was das denn für eine Liebe sei, die im Opfern und im Schweigen bestehe. Die das Blut tropfen lässt. Tag und Nacht, Ströme von Blut, und die Opfer stöhnen lässt. Tag und Nacht, alle Lebensalter. Gute and Böse, Schuldige und Unschuldige. Und die schweigend dabei sitzt, das Haupt in die Hände gestützt, und ansieht, was sie gemacht hat, und findet, dass sie es sehr gut gemacht habe . . .<sup>11</sup>

Holding these views, Orla can no longer find any satisfaction in the traditional religious beliefs, and must work out again for himself and from the beginning an honest and satisfying attitude to-

wards the basic problems of existence. From a theological point of view the argument is naive and can be easily refuted, although the refutation requires a basic premise of faith which Wiechert cannot accept. The very naivety of the argument and Wiechert's apparent ignorance of the existence of an almost standard and traditional refutation seem to vouch for the fundamental honesty of the charge made, and convince us that Orla is here speaking for Wiechert and expressing his emotionally based but deep-seated doubts. The same accusation, that there is no evidence of God's loving care in the world, appears again in *Die Jerominkinder*, where it is expressed by the apostate Agricola. In face of the death of children in an epidemic, the Christian concept of God as a loving Father becomes nothing more than a beautiful legend, and to preach this legend as truth is a form of deceit to which Agricola, as a priest, cannot lend himself.

The calling into question of divine loving-kindness is, as we have seen, linked with the idea of divine responsibility for suffering in the world. In this connection it is interesting to note that whereas in the earlier novels evil is usually represented by a grotesque and unconvincing villain, a recurring portrait-type which might be held to indicate a masochistic strain in the immature Wiechert, the later novels, such as *Missa sine Nomine*, dispense with the individual representative of evil, and show evil rather to be inherent in the nature of the universe, a force which may seize upon an individual without the latter's being involved in responsibility and guilt. This is exemplified in the carefully sympathetic picture which Wiechert draws of the girl who shoots at Amadeus. By presenting evil as something inherent in the creation, Wiechert is re-stating the old argument that either God will and cannot, in which case He is not God, or else He can and will not, and this possibility leads to the blasphemy of 'Komm her, du Kindermörder!' with which Agricola expresses his despair and anguish in *Die Jerominkinder*. It leads also to the conception, frequently expressed in *Das einfache Leben* and in *Die Jerominkinder*, that the world could have been created better. This view derives from the same inability to reconcile the imperfection of the world with the perfection of the creator. God is accused of having committed an error during the act of creation: 'Gott hat einen Fehler gemacht, einen Konstruktionsfehler'; or a more general charge of criminal negligence is formulated: 'Es hätte besser gemacht werden können'. The theological reflections of Heinrich Fries when considering this aspect of Wiechert's religious thought would clearly not have satisfied Wiechert. Fries maintains that all creation is imperfect, and denies that there is any-

thing paradoxical in the idea of an imperfect creation of a perfect creator, since the creator is absolute in essence, whereas the creation is not. Fries' second argument in refutation of this point is to transfer the responsibility for the imperfections of the world from God to man. Both these arguments would have seemed like precious hair-splitting and evasiveness to Wiechert, who makes a show of simplicity in style and also in thought.

Wiechert adopts an unequivocally rationalist standpoint in comparison with the theologians, and this makes it difficult to accept the claims of critics like Professor Berger, who try to show that Wiechert was essentially a mystic.<sup>12</sup> Wiechert makes a simple case from simple evidence for not accepting belief in God, and *Die Jerominkinder* has been described by H. Ollesch as the Odyssey of the hero away from belief in God.<sup>13</sup> Theological arguments do not come within Wiechert's scope, and he is not prepared to look at the problem in their way. The logical inference is drawn by Thomas von Orla in *Das einfache Leben*: 'Wenn wir die Welt aus der Liebe Gottes herausnehmen, bekommt alles seinen Sinn.' This is however only logical in its admission of failure to understand or to believe in the divine plan for the world. It is not so easy to see how war, cruelty, and suffering become more explicable and acceptable merely by denying the existence of a divine plan. Again Wiechert is striving for simplicity, but the simplicity he achieves is that of complete negation. Nietzsche's concept of the dead God appears in Wiechert's work as early as *Der Knecht Gottes*, *Andreas Nyland*, but Wiechert fails to convince himself and us that God is really dead, for in his later works he continues to fulminate against Him. His protests and accusations however have a hollow ring. 'Der Wiechert der späteren Werke hadert . . . ins Nichts hinein'.<sup>14</sup> From this point of view Wiechert is a rationalist nihilist. Having destroyed, he might be expected to build up a new positive outlook to replace that which he has so painfully destroyed, but it is here that Wiechert is most unsatisfying, since he is prevented by his own nostalgia for the legend he has renounced from offering any adequate substitute. His repeated theses against faith sound like the desperate attempts of a man trying to silence his own doubts by continually raising his voice. His inability to silence those doubts explain his failure to present an acceptable alternative, whilst he is continually tormented by regrets for the security of the faith he has destroyed.

Wiechert's inadequacy then results from the fact that he remains unable to escape from a half-way position. On the one hand he cannot entirely shake off a predilection for the authority of the Christian faith; on the other hand he fails to develop the rationalist



attack logically to the point at which he can offer a positive substitute for faith. The first point can be proved by indicating Wiechert's lasting fondness for the language of the Bible, especially of the Old Testament. Quotations from the Bible appear throughout his work, sometimes marking a decisive turning-point in a character's development, as in *Tobias*, *Der Hauptmann von Kapernaum*, or *Das einfache Leben*; sometimes as a motto for the whole book, as in the case of *Die Jerominkinder*. Biblical images abound in all his works and nearly all his wise characters quote freely from the Old Testament. More striking still is the fact that Wiechert frequently models his own sonorous and evocative prose on the style of the Bible. We know from his autobiographical works that the Bible had a profound influence on his early years, and it was one of the few books he read in Buchenwald. Wiechert deliberately uses the language of the Bible to give authority to his pronouncements, and also to hide the emptiness of his final position in the beauty of his prose. 'Der Abgrund, in den die Welt abstürzt, wird mit dem schönen, klangvollen Wort seiner Dichtung verdeckt—aus dem Nichts wird bei Wiechert ein schönklingendes Nichts!'<sup>15</sup> This use of the language of the Old Testament,—a good example of which is to be found in the *Hirtennovelle*—is not however entirely a matter of conscious deception. The Bible remains linked in Wiechert's outlook with security of faith, and with the innocence and peace of childhood. Many of his characters, Jakob Jeromin for example, are secure in their faith because they rely so completely on the Bible. Wiechert has lost this childlike faith, as is evidenced by his tirades against the cruelty or the indifference of God, but he has retained the memory of the security which faith brings and which is evoked for him by the Bible. It is not without significance that Wiechert's nostalgia is mainly for the Old Testament, since this suggests a pre-Christian faith in which Jehovah and not Christ is the central figure, and God in Wiechert's work is certainly more Jehovah than Christ.

Because he is haunted by the evocative language of the Bible, Wiechert fails to offer any adequate substitute for the faith he destroys. What he has to offer he has himself summed up in one of his poems as 'ein Bisschen Brot und viel Erbarmen'. From the time of *Die Magd des Jürgen Dorskocil* onwards, Wiechert extols the idea of work as the means of salvation in a world from which the love of God has been excluded. It is work which saves Michael Fahrenholz in *Die Majorin*; Orla in *Das einfache Leben* becomes a simple fisherman in his effort to find the meaning of life; the story of Jons Ehrenreich Jeromin is a saga leading from the faith

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of his father to the devotion to work in the restricted sphere of village-doctor; the pastor Wittkopp in *Missa sine Nomine* turns from his theological doubts to find solace in cutting peat. 'Die Hand ist mehr als der Mund.'<sup>16</sup> All of Wiechert's heroes end in an escapist attitude of one form or another; the majority take refuge in human activity amidst human companionship and find their solace entirely in this world. After all the speculation and fine words we are consigned to a world in which there is no transcendence. Pity, comfort, and solace are the virtues extolled with the virtue of work. Love of one's fellow men and work for the material needs of one's fellow men are the twin veils which Wiechert draws seductively over the emptiness of his world. 'Die Lehre der Liebe' is moreover presented with such sickly sweetness that we can hardly find in it the strength to face the essentially tragic view of life implicit in Wiechert's works. 'Ein Kraut Schmerzenlos, ein Tropfen Todvorbei, ein Löffel Barmherzigkeit'<sup>17</sup> is a recipe for healing the sorrows of the world which belongs all too clearly to the realm of the fairy-tale: and the world of fairy-tale is not so very far removed from the picture of the world which Wiechert tries to evoke by using the familiar and reassuring imagery and language of the Bible, when in reality he has lost the assurance of faith. For Wiechert the Christian message has become a beautiful legend, he can no longer believe in it, but he cannot free himself from its attraction as a legend. This failure on his part explains his inability to develop his arguments satisfactorily, and we are left with our hopes of a positive solution disappointed.

In *Die Jerominkinder* Ernst Wiechert tells of the pastor Agricola, who has lost faith, but still talks with God, although He is not there. The Oberkonsistorialrat comments: 'Ja, so leicht ist es nicht, ihn auszulöschen.' This is Wiechert's experience too. In his last work, *Missa sine Nomine*, a kindred figure to Agricola, the pastor Wittkopp, says that he has taken a holiday, as it were, until his faith returns. 'Nicht vom lieben Gott, aber von meinem Amt. Von Gott hat man nie Ferien . . .'

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Cf. for example J. Pfeiffer; *Wege zur Erzählkunst* (pp. 124-130) for an analysis of the 'unechter Legendenstil' of Wiechert's *Hirtennovelle* and Compare B. Q. Morgan: *Ernst Wiecherts Hirtennovelle—Versuch einer Stilanalyse* (German Quarterly XIX No. 4, 1946, pp. 274-282) for a less critical and less satisfying treatment.

<sup>2</sup> W. Arnold: *Das Zeugnis eines Dichters für die Bibel* (Stimmen der Zeit, No. 140, Aug. 1947).

<sup>3</sup> H. Fries: *Ernst Wiechert. Eine theologische Besinnung* (Speyer, Pilger Verlag, 1949).

H. Ollesch: *Ernst Wiechert* (Emil Müller Verlag, Wuppertal, 1949).

- W. Grenzmann: *Dichtung und Glaube* (pp. 98-113).
- <sup>4</sup> Wiechert: *Jahre und Zeiten* (ed. Rentsch, 1949, p. 204).
- <sup>5</sup> Idem p. 205.
- <sup>6</sup> H. Ebeling: *Ernst Wiechert. Das Werk eines Dichters* (Limes Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1947, p. 100).
- <sup>7</sup> Wiechert: *Der Totenwald* (ed. Desch, Munich, 1948, p. 149).
- <sup>8</sup> Idem p. 109.
- <sup>9</sup> Fries: *op.cit.*, pp. 41-42.
- <sup>10</sup> Wiechert: *Die Jerominkinder* (ed. Desch, Munich, 1948, p. 149).
- <sup>11</sup> Wiechert: *Das einfache Leben* (ed. Langen-Müller, Munich, 1939, p. 278).
- <sup>12</sup> W. Berger: *The unpolitical outlook of Ernst Wiechert: a reply* (German Life and Letters, Vol. VIII, No. 2, Jan. 1955).
- <sup>13</sup> Ollesch: *op.cit.*, pp. 77ff., p. 86.
- <sup>14</sup> Grenzmann: *op.cit.*, p. 103.
- <sup>15</sup> Ollesch: *op.cit.*, p. 94.
- <sup>16</sup> Wiechert: *Die Jerominkinder* p. 186.
- <sup>17</sup> Idem p. 412.

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## THE TECHNIQUE OF VALÉRY'S *ORPHEE*

*Est-il impossible, moyennant le temps, l'application, la finesse, le désir, de procéder par ordre pour arriver à la poésie? P.V.*

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The twenty-one poems of the *Album de vers anciens* have a central importance in Valéry's career. It was by his revision of these poems, written for the most part some twenty years before, that he found in 1912 and 1913 a new urge for composition. We know that his first reaction on re-reading his early work had been a whole-hearted disgust; but the very violence of his feeling was to call up a desire to correct and purge. He began to rewrite: to try 'de les renforcer, d'en refondre la substance musicale.'<sup>1</sup> At the same time came the seed of new and different poems for within a few years *La Jeune Parque* and *Charmes* were being composed.

The poet himself ascribed great value to this revision of his early verse and to all that it taught him. He went so far as to consider it as having precipitated something like a rejuvenation, a creator's 'puberté seconde'. Yet, surprising as it may seem, the numerous critics of his work have treated these new versions with neglect. They have on the whole bluntly denied that any substantial change was made (such, for example, is the view of



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Sorensen and Scarfe<sup>2</sup>) and in no case has there been a sustained effort to weigh one version against the other.<sup>3</sup> The object of the present essay is, then, to study the early and late forms of a sonnet chosen from the *Album*, in an attempt to find some indication of Valéry's change of approach to the writing of verse.

*Orphée*, embodying one of the most characteristic of Valéry's themes, was written at Montpellier in 1891, before the poet's twentieth birthday. It occupies a unique place in Valéry's work in that, although a sonnet, it was originally published in prose as a conclusion to an article entitled *Paradoxe sur l'architecte*.<sup>4</sup> Here the young writer had evoked the correspondence between music and architecture, between 'la façade royale de Reims et telle page de Tannhäuser', and expressed his ideal of an art where 'un largo triomphal et total éclate sous l'ultime voûte; de tous les motifs exprimés se dégage et s'essore le secret, le glorieux amour de l'absolu . . .' Gide read the essay and wrote his friend of his enthusiasm, particularly for the conclusion, 'ce faux sonnet irréprochable et splendide'.<sup>5</sup> The same year Valéry published *Orphée* in another journal (*La Conque*), but now employed the traditional sonnet disposition; it is this version that we reproduce.

Il évoque, en un bois thessalien, Orphée  
Sous les myrtes, et le soir antique descend.  
Le bois sacré s'emplit lentement de lumière  
Et le dieu tient la lyre entre ses doigts d'argent.  
Le dieu chante. et selon le rythme tout-puissant.  
S'élèvent au soleil les fabuleuses pierres  
Et l'on voit grandir vers l'azur incandescent  
Les hauts murs d'or harmonieux d'un sanctuaire.  
Il chante, assis au bord du ciel splendide. Orphée!  
Son oeuvre se revêt d'un vespéral trophée  
Et sa lyre divine enchante les porphyres,  
Car le temple érigé par ce *musicien*  
Unit la sûreté des rythmes anciens  
A l'âme immense du grand hymne sur la lyre! . . .

The revised version did not appear in 1920 with most of the other *Vers anciens*. It was published in 1926 in the Stols edition (*Quelques Vers anciens*) and in subsequent printings of the *Album*. We give the poem as it appears in the final revised edition (1942):

. . . Je compose en esprit, sous les myrtes, Orphée  
L'admirable! . . . Le feu, des cirques purs descend;  
Il change le mont chauve en auguste trophée  
D'où s'exhale d'un dieu l'acte retentissant.  
Si le dieu chante, il rompt le site tout-puissant;

Le soleil voit l'horreur du mouvement des pierres;  
Une plainte inouïe appelle éblouissants  
Les hauts murs d'or harmonieux d'un sanctuaire.  
Il chante, assis au bord du ciel splendide, Orphée!  
Le roc marche, et trébuche; et chaque pierre fée  
Se sent un poids nouveau qui vers l'azur délire;  
D'un Temple à demi nu le soir baigne l'essor,  
Et soi-même il s'assemble et s'ordonne dans l'or  
A l'âme immense du grand hymne sur la lyre!

The juxtaposition of these two poems underlines their general similarity and also particular differences. We propose to pursue the detailed comparison of these versions from three aspects: firstly, the subject; secondly, the form and versification; thirdly, the essential principles of design on which each poem is dependent.

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It cannot be our aim to show in detail the significance for Valéry of the theme of 'musical architecture'. It was taken up again, after *Orphée*, in the *Cantique des Colonnes*, the 'mélodrame' *Amphion*, in *Eupalinos* and several other essays. The poet, we are told, had studied Viollet-le-Duc's *Dictionnaire* from the age of twelve; in addition, with the help of a fellow-student Pierre Féline at Montpellier, he had come to a love of music, especially Wagner. At nineteen, when he was writing this sonnet, he was endeavouring to work out the aesthetic implications of the two arts. And the ideal expressed in the *Paradoxe* and *Orphée* of their union may be said to underlie the whole of his poetic production. Music and architecture do not concern themselves, as Valéry was often to repeat, with representing a portion of reality, but rather with the laws of the universe and of the mind. One is pregnant movement, the other order and stability. They thus constitute a figuration of universal laws: 'leur valeur d'universalité réside dans le fait qu'ils semblent donner des figures aux lois, ou déduire des lois elles-mêmes leurs figures.'<sup>6</sup>

The myth of Orpheus which is, in Valéry's own words, 'la fable même de la mobilité et de l'arrangement'<sup>7</sup> constitutes the perfect figure of the dialectic of music and architecture as Valéry conceives it, of a gradual discovery of stability. Furthermore, we shall notice later on that, similar in this respect also to music and architecture, the image of Orpheus seems to be 'deduced' from a formal law; at least, in these sonnets we find a convergence of image and form. *Orphée* thus appears as the epitome of the union of both

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ideal arts by the subject represented and, doubtless for its author, by the very genesis of the poem itself.

The theme of musical architecture is of course common to the two sonnets. However, we should note certain important corrections which have modified the subject of the second version.

If we examine first of all the words which have been suppressed, it becomes obvious that the twilight atmosphere (*soir antique, vespéral trophée*) has almost wholly disappeared, together with the dog-eared Symbolist vocabulary (*azur incandescent, porphyres*). The description of Orpheus has also gone (*ses doigts d'argent, sa lyre divine*) as well as the only too apparent opposition between the italicised *musicien* and the construction of the temple. The majestic figure of the god depends now for its evocation on 'L'admirable!', strongly accented in the second line.

In his revision, Valéry has given special attention to modification of adjectives and verbs. There is a slightly greater number of adjectives in the second version and these are much more impressive. The six original ones which have been retained are of this nature (*tout-puissant, hauts, harmonieux, splendide, immense, grand*). The epithets that look as if they came straight from some word-list of *fin-de-siècle* poetry (*thessalien, fabuleuses, incandescent, vespéral*) have been eliminated, giving way to a more athletic vocabulary.

The verbs have been altered in no less searching a manner. In the first line, for example, the change of person from third to first is important, and we shall discuss it below. But the use of 'composer' (replacing 'évoquer') appears to us to give the keynote of the entire sonnet. For this word is taken up (just as in the *Cimetière marin*) on different levels: the poet (or the poem) 'composes', Orpheus 'composes', the stones 'compose themselves'. A multiple ordering is taking place throughout, echoing the first words of the poem.<sup>8</sup>

Other notable new verbs we find in the second version are *rompre* ('il rompt le site'—the god breaks the spell of motionlessness in order to impose a spell of another kind); *marcher* and *trébucher* ('Le roc marche et trébuche'—Valéry conveys the faery of this action of the stones); *délire* ('. . . un poids nouveau qui vers l'azur délire'—this forceful word, and its anticipation of and contrast to the rhyme 'lyre', provide a climax of wildness before the joyous confidence of the last tercet).

We have thus seen in passing some of the characteristics which distinguish one version of *Orphée* from the other. The main new elements, however, remain to be isolated. The first we may note is the atmosphere of *awe*, quite absent from the 1891 version. The



later sonnet underlines this aspect several times. above all in line 6:

Le soleil voit l'horreur du mouvement des pierres

But other phrases produce a similar effect: 'le mont chauve', 'une plainte inouïe', 'chaque pierre fée' and (as we have observed above) 'marche et trébuche', 'délire'. In the second line (' . . . Le feu, des cirques purs descend'), the archetypal 'feu' and the undefined 'cirques purs' have a Nervalian wonder. We would thus suggest that these numerous additions constitute an essential subsidiary theme in the poem.<sup>9</sup>

Another new theme is that of the sea-birth which is suggested in line 12. and which also has no precedent in the first version.

D'un Temple à demi nu le soir baigne l'essor

No lover of Valéry's poetry will need to be reminded that this theme is one of the most constant in his work (for example *Naissance de Vénus*, *Hélène*, *Baignée*, etc.). In *Orphée* the image, although undeveloped, is none the less present; and the Temple rises half-veiled like Aphrodite from the waves. Its ascent ('essor') balances the descent of fire at the beginning of the poem and adds a sensuous element to the exultation of the last tercet.

Before proceeding to discuss the formal aspects of the two poems, let us consider briefly the use which we have already mentioned of the first person singular at the beginning of the revised version.<sup>10</sup> It corresponds to a practice which is universal in *La Jeune Parque* and *Charmes*, and has its origin, we would suggest, in a psychological observation of the author. Valéry did not endeavour to elaborate on it in his writings on poetry; but we find in a letter of 1915 some remarks which appear of special relevance.

Je ne conçois pas que l'on puisse considérer le Non Moi sans assigner le repère Moi. J'ajoute que ce Moi n'est pas la personnalité. Des gens oublient dans la démence leur personnalité: ils conservent un Moi; aussi inexistant, si vous voulez, et aussi nécessaire que l'est, par exemple, le centre de gravité d'une bague. Un certain Moi se forme de mes éléments dès que des conditions sont remplies. Il se déclare de lui-même, il est plus ou moins riche, plus ou moins stable. De même une mélodie résulte ou ne résulte pas d'une suite de notes. Je dirai aussi que le rêve est une formation naive, aveugle, d'un Moi tout juste suffisant, etc. . .<sup>11</sup>

It seems that, on the plane of poetry, Valéry would wish to propose, not himself, but a hypothetical self which will serve as a centre of gravity for the reader who unconsciously adopts it, as

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the dreamer adopts the self of his dreams. This poetic self will be satisfying only in so far as the reader can identify himself with it; that is, in so far as the poem presents a situation of universal validity. The situation of the second *Orphée* may be so described (whereas the first version remains for the most part anecdotal). It is a disorder (the intervention of the god, the breaking-up of the site, the movement of the stones) which becomes an order. This is precisely, as Valéry would affirm, the most universal of subjects and the fundamental law of the mind. We read in *Mauvaises pensées et autres*: 'Notre esprit est fait d'un désordre, plus un besoin de mettre en ordre.'<sup>12</sup> To the disorder, the second version adds a panic fear; to the final order, Venus emerging from the sea. Disorder has become order and horror, joy—our own joy: for the poem is no longer merely the description of a mythical Orpheus but constitutes an act, a creative experience which we find ourselves imitating.

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Just as the Symbolists and Parnassians, Valéry favours the sonnet throughout his work: in the *Album* we find twelve examples of it and in *Charmes* six. The sonnet was obviously attractive to a young poet who had been nourished on Baudelaire, Heredia and Mallarmé and was acquainted with the theories of Poe concerning the short poem. Indeed, in letters written in 1890 and 1891, we see Valéry choosing the sonnet as the supreme poetic form. It will be a sort of sacred initiation which leads the reader to a 'coup de foudre final et décisif', 'Je ne puis mieux le comparer', he writes to Pierre Louÿs,

Je ne puis mieux le comparer qu'aux degrés d'un autel magnifique, aux quatorze marches de porphyre que couronne le tabernacle. L'ornement, l'orphèvrerie, les cierges, les encens, tout s'élance, tout est disposé pour attirer l'attention sur l'ostensoir, je veux dire le dernier vers.<sup>13</sup>

But there is also another reason for Valéry's fidelity to the sonnet throughout his career. The conventional limits were accepted as a means of discovery, the form would engender its own content. The poet was no doubt working towards this characteristic view of his in 1891, at the time of the *Paradoxe sur l'architecte*, but did not express it clearly with respect to the sonnet until much later. In *Degas, Danse, Dessin* he will write this appreciation: 'Le sonnet . . . nous enseigne à découvrir qu'une forme est féconde en idées, paradoxe apparent et principe profond d'où l'analyse mathématique a tiré quelque chose de sa prodigieuse puissance.'<sup>14</sup> As

regards *Orphée* itself, let us note the particular interdependence one discerns here of form and inwards. For the sonnet—form is par excellence a marriage of music and architecture: it is as it were both movement and immobility, at once a succession of moments and one immediate whole. Thus Orpheus-Amphion playing the lyre and building a temple is none other, we may feel, than the very form of the sonnet made manifest. The underlying movement and the subject coincide, are the creation of the poetic state.

It is important to examine certain details of this form as shown in *Orphée*, in particular the use of rhyme and rhythm.

The rhyme scheme, although basically the same in the two versions, presents some interesting differences. The early sonnet had an irregular first quatrain (abcb) which however was interwoven with the rest of the scheme (bcbc; aad; eed). In the second version Valéry alters the rhyme scheme of the first quatrain and thus of the whole sonnet: abab; bcbc; aad; eed. But modifications of rhymes have also taken place in lines 7, 10, 11, 12 and 13. Of these changes the most important are the last two, which involve a change in the sound-pattern. *Or*, apart from being a favourite 'ideal' word in Valéry, constitutes part of the fundamental harmony of *Orphée* and is organically justified (cf. the previous *or* (1.8.), *bord* (1.9.), *Orphée* (1. 1.9.), *essor* (1.12), *s'ordonne* (1.13)).<sup>15</sup>

It is however the rhythm, much more than the rhyme, which has been profoundly changed. Only three lines have been retained from the original poem and each one of these presents some interesting trait of rhythm, largely dependent on the position of the caesura. It will be seen for instance in line 8 ('Les hauts murs d'or harmonieux d'un sanctuaire') that the alexandrine is a trimeter, lending particular relief to 'harmonieux'. This technique is also employed in the last line of both sonnets, where the emphasis falls on 'grand hymne':

A l'âme immense du grand hymne sur la lyre.

Also common to the two poems is the opening line of the first tercet where a series of disyllabic groups gives weight and precision to the exclamation: an effect which is reinforced by the caesural pauses.

Il chante, assis au bord du ciel splendide, Orphée!

Apart from these three lines, which were retained, the rhythms of the early version are supple to the point of being lax. The new sonnet has on the contrary a dramatic vigour which owes much to control of rhythm. Throughout the poem key-words are carefully prepared by rhythmic variations; in line 5, for example, the



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caesura after 'chante' introduces a new movement, in accord with the thought. A similar series of rhythmic variations in lines 10, 11 and 12, prepares the balance, or *palier d'élan*, of the four anapests in line 13.

In this regard also, the use of unelided 'e' mute is instructive. The over-all frequency varies little between the two poems; a notable change occurs however in the first quatrain where the first version contains eight cases of unelided 'e' mute, while the second version has eleven. The effect is to heighten the rhythm, and give an added resonance to the act of the god.

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After this consideration of subject and form, it now appears possible for us to go further and discuss the principle of design which dictates the entire poetic structure. Here we realize that the difference between the two poems is fundamental.

The early version is essentially a forward movement in which the first quatrain is a preparation for the song of Orpheus, the second quatrain and first tercet describe the building of the temple, and the final tercet explains ('car') the construction.

The design of the second version is much more subtle. A forward movement there is, but each stanza also gives *in parvo* a reflection of the whole, each time from a different viewpoint. The four sections evoke the same transformation,—act and response. Stanza 1 impresses above all by its majesty as the mountain is changed into an 'auguste trophée' by the fire from above. In the second stanza horror is emphasized, but is resolved into harmony in the last line. The first tercet describes a precipitate advance to the appeal of the chant; and the final tercet suggests a movement of ascent which balances the first section, but which is now bathed in beauty and a new order. We thus find that each part is performing a different function, but is at the same time echoing the ground-pattern of the whole poem.

The forward movement is conveyed by the different emphases in the four sections, with its final resolution of stresses in the second tercet. It is also carefully suggested by the use of words which are virtual repetitions, but which serve to 'modulate' (as Valéry himself might say) the thought: cirques purs, auguste trophée, sanctuaire. Temple; compose, chante, chante, s'assemble et s'ordonne; change, rompt; s'exhale, appelle. A progression is finally implied by the surprising use of 'le soleil' in line 6 and 'le soir' in line 12.<sup>16</sup>

Almost as noteworthy as this forward movement is the circular design which we have seen in the *descent* described in the first

stanza and the *ascent* of the last; as well as in the echo of the opening in the last two lines. The total design, both progressive and circular,<sup>17</sup> will no doubt recall to the reader the design of the *Cimetière Marin*. And here it is of capital interest to see that not only the movement is similar, but also several details of vocabulary. There would be much to say concerning this rapprochement, and the convergence of theories of poetic design and language that it quite possibly presupposes. Let us limit ourselves to calling attention to these points of contact: at the beginning of *Orphée* and of the *Cimetière Marin*:

. . . Je compose en esprit, sous les myrtes. Orphée  
L'admirable! . . Le feu, des cirques purs descend . .  
Midi le juste y compose de feux  
La mer . . .

and towards the end of both poems:

. . . chaque pierre fée  
Se sent un poids nouveau qui vers l'azur délire . . .  
(Orphée)

Oui! Grande mer de délires douée . . .  
(Cimetière Marin)

D'un Temple à demi nu le soir baigne l'essor . . .  
(Orphée)

Courons à l'onde en rejaillir vivant! . . .  
(Cimetière Marin)

A l'âme immense du grand hymne sur la lyre! . . .  
(Orphée)

L'air immense ouvre et referme mon livre . . .  
(Cimetière Marin)

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From the comparison of these two poems, we have been able to indicate a notable change in attitude to poetic composition. The tension is heightened by revision of vocabulary and prosody; a new wildness and sensuousness have been introduced; there is in the second sonnet an unerring movement which can justifiably be termed geometrical; above all, a legendary description in the Parnassian style has given place to a poem which endeavours to convey the very sensation, *in actu*, of creative experience. It would of course be possible to proceed further and link tendencies within the revision to certain of Valéry's general theories. Thus the combined circular and progressive movement of the second *Orphée* could, we believe, be considered profitably in relation to the poet's

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analysis of time and, in particular, of irreversible sequences (see the little-known article 'Le temps', *Mercure de France*, May 1899). In the same way, the changes in vocabulary and the introduction of new subsidiary themes are no doubt dependent on the psychological theory of language which he developed around 1897 (cf. *Correspondance Gide-Valéry*, letters of 19. iv. 1897; 29. viii. 1900; 14. vii. 1901).

In the final analysis, however, the reader may remain sceptical as to the value of the poetic methods we have traced in this article. And indeed one is ready to agree that *Orphée*, despite its skilful revision, does not reach the necessity of great art. Yet the best of Valéry's work does; and such preoccupation with technique as shown in the revision of *Orphée* was fundamental to the formation of those 'exercices' which became finished machines—and our enchantment.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> 'Fragments des Mémoires d'un poème', *Variété V*, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> H. Sorensen: *La Poésie de Paul Valéry. Etude stylistique sur la 'Jeune Parque'* (Copenhagen, A. Busck, 1944), p. 329; F. Scarfe: *The Art of Paul Valéry. A study in Dramatic Monologue*. (Heinemann, 1953), p. 142. Elsewhere Scarfe describes *Orphée* as being a sonnet 'in the earliest manner of Valéry' (p. 142) and 'a conventional treatment of the theme of music moving mountains' (p. 92).

<sup>3</sup> The most detailed study of the *Album* so far is to be found in P.-O. Walzer: *La Poésie de Valéry* (Genève, Cailler, 1953), Ch. II, especially pp. 103-118. M. Walzer gives the early versions of most of the poems, including *Orphée*.

<sup>4</sup> This article, originally published in *L'Ermitage* (March 1891), was included by Valéry in the first volume of his collected works (Editions du Sagittaire, 1931).

<sup>5</sup> *Correspondance André Gide—Paul Valéry* (Gallimard, 1955), p. 75; Letter of the 29th of March, 1891.

<sup>6</sup> *Eupalinos ou l'Architecte* (Editions du Sagittaire), p. 117.

<sup>7</sup> Letter to Claude Debussy, reproduced in *Lettres à Quelques-uns*, (Gallimard, 1952), p. 63.

<sup>8</sup> The combination 's'assembler' et 's'ordonner' found in line 13 is used in one of Valéry's essays, again to describe the 'composition' of a final harmony: 'Ces commencements de l'état chantant, ces printemps intimes de l'invention expressive sont délicieux, comme est délicieux le balbutiement préalable de l'orchestre, quelques instants avant qu'il s'ordonne et s'assemble et qu'il obéisse . . .' ('Le Prince et la Jeune Parque', *Variété V*, p. 119). cf. also 'Histoire d'Amphion' (*Pièces sur l'art* p. 76) where, among several other evocations which recall *Orphée*, we read: '... les pierres et les blocs épars s'ébranlent, ils roulent et ils sont attirés, trébuchant et rebondissant, vers un lieu où leur amas s'assemble, qui, peu à peu, prend forme. et s'ordonne, et compose un édifice, un temple'—(my italics).

<sup>9</sup> cf. 'L'horreur sacrée' of which Valéry speaks in 'Histoire d'Amphion' (*loc. cit.*).

<sup>10</sup> Scarfe (*loc. cit.*) unaccountably writes: '*Orphée* is entirely in the third person, as was the 1891 version . . .' (p. 166).



<sup>11</sup> Letter to Albert Coste, 1915, reproduced in *Paul Valéry vivant* (Cahiers du Sud, 1946), p. 271.

<sup>12</sup> *Mauvaises pensées et autres* (Gallimard, 1942), p. 21.

<sup>13</sup> Letter to Pierre Louys (2nd of June 1890) reproduced by H. Mondor: 'Le Vase Brisé de Paul Valéry Etudiant' in *Paul Valéry: Essais et témoignages* (Paris, Zeluck, 1945).

<sup>14</sup> *Degas, Danse, Dessin* (Paris, N.R.F., 1938), p. 71.

<sup>15</sup> The other basic phonetic element is, we would suggest, *ir* (*myrtes, admirable, cirques, délire, lyre*).

<sup>16</sup> Another means of suggesting progression is by the use of 'et'. The four uses in the quatrains of the 1891 version have been suppressed entirely, while the tercets now have four uses instead of one. The two halves of the sonnet are thereby differentiated, the tone is heightened as the poem proceeds.

<sup>17</sup> We see this design as the incarnation of the ideal Valéry put forward for the sonnet in *Calepin d'un Poète, Poésies* (Paris, N.R.F. 1933), p. 194:

Gloire éternelle à l'inventeur du sonnet! Toutefois, malgré tant de beaux sonnets qui ont été faits, le plus beau reste encore à faire: ce sera celui dont les quatre parties rempliront chacune une fonction bien différente de celle des autres, et cette progression de différences dans les strophes cependant bien justifiée par la ligne de tout le discours.

In a letter written in 1917 the poet describes in a different manner the same geometrical pattern: 'Le sonnet . . . peut se consacrer à faire percevoir toutes les faces d'un seul et même diamant. C'est une rotation du même corps autour d'un point ou d'un axe.' (*Lettres à Quelques-uns*, p. 124).

<sup>18</sup> P.-O. Walzer's (loc. cit.) conclusion on the *Album* as a whole is quite the opposite of our judgment of *Orphée*. He speaks of 'l'atmosphère floue, fluide, languidement rêveuse, qui est celle de l'*Album* . . .' (p. 106).

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## AUGUSTIN LODEWYCKX

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On 8 December 1956 Dr Augustin Lodewyckx, the former head of the School of Germanic Languages in the University of Melbourne, celebrates his eightieth birthday. At the same time he has been on the staff of Melbourne University for just over forty years. This seems to be an occasion to survey briefly the life and work of a personality who has played an important part not only in the counsels of his University but also in the Victorian community.

Augustin Lodewyckx was born in the little country town of Booischoot in northern Belgium in 1876. He received his secondary education in Antwerp, and studied Germanic Languages, French and Philosophy at the University of Ghent from 1897 to 1902, obtaining the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and Letters with a

dissertation on *Grillparzers Sprache und Stil in seinen Dramen und Gedichten*. This work, for which the Belgian Government awarded a gold medal, secured him at once a scholarship for post-graduate studies at the University of Leyden, Holland, and the position of co-editor of the great Dutch Dictionary, the equivalent to the Oxford Dictionary. In 1905 Dr Lodewyckx was invited by Victoria College, Stellenbosch to the chair of Modern Languages as Professor of French and German. In South Africa he met Anna Hansen from Norway, whom he married in 1910, and who followed him to central Africa when he was called upon by King Albert of the Belgians to enter the Belgian Colonial Service, and to select suitable immigrants for Katanga, the south-eastern province of the Belgian Congo. For three years he supervised their settlement in the Colony. He then set out for a journey around the world, but found himself stranded in Australia when war broke out in August 1914. After a short period as modern language master at Melbourne Grammar School, he was given charge of the Department of German in the University of Melbourne, a position which he took up at the beginning of the academic year 1916. For 31 years Dr Lodewyckx, who was promoted to Associate Professor in 1922, devoted himself to the development of Germanic Studies in Melbourne. He promoted not only the study of German and Scandinavian Languages and Literatures, but was also able to convince the Council that the inclusion of Dutch Life and Letters in the Arts Faculty degree courses was imperative for Australia owing to her proximity to Indonesia. The study of Dutch as a full Arts subject was taken up in Melbourne—as the only tertiary institution in Australasia where this field was taught—in 1942, at which time the name of Professor Lodewyckx' department was changed to 'School of Germanic Languages'. His retirement at the age of 70 (in 1947) did not, however, terminate his service with the University. He has been in charge of a course in Old Norse and Icelandic within his old department for the last 10 years, and continues to teach these courses with his enthusiasm and teaching abilities undiminished.

Professor Lodewyckx' academic interests lay predominantly in the field of philology and the history of Germanic languages within the Indo-European group of languages. He brought to bear upon his students the strict discipline and exactitude which this field of study entails. He was imbued with the European idea of what a University should be, and promoted sound scholarship as one of the basic aims of university education. On the other hand, Dr Lodewyckx was anything but one-sided in his interests and work. Whenever he went abroad on study leave, his first task was

naturally to inform himself about the latest developments in scholarship in his particular academic field, as for instance in his two sojourns in Iceland in 1931 and 1937; but he also used these opportunities to broaden his knowledge of human and public affairs, travelling to Japan, the United States, Soviet Russia and the central European countries, and thoroughly studying in the latter the teaching and organisation of their universities. His period of service in South Africa and in the Congo made him particularly interested in the problems of peopling new and empty countries, and he applied the knowledge thus gained to Australia, as the welfare of Australia, whose citizen he had become, was uppermost in his mind. With this in view the range of his publications shows a width and breadth that spread over many fields of human knowledge and practical affairs. In his special sphere, Germanic Philology, he has not written large tomes, and only his former and present students and his friends can appreciate the depth of his knowledge. However, even the stranger gains a glimpse of it when perusing his Handbook of Dutch, his contributions to the study of the Icelandic sagas and to a number of language problems, and his most interesting studies on the name of Australia, which couple linguistic problems so ingeniously with cultural history. His wider importance as a writer is found in his surveys on matters of public importance regarding Australasian affairs. He has written *the* standard work on German immigration into Australia and on the history of the German communities in this country, and has elaborated on this particular subject in many articles. His monographs, in Dutch, on Australia and New Zealand have made Australasia, her peoples, history, culture and institutions known abroad. He has summed up the problem of peopling the Australian continent in a book, published in his eightieth year, which applies the methods of comparative history and geography with a perspicacity which can only arouse admiration. It is not surprising therefore that the sovereigns of Denmark and Iceland and the Netherlands and the President of the Federal Republic of Germany have honoured him highly, making him a Knight of the Icelandic Falcon (1937), a Knight Officer of the Order of Orange-Nassau (1952), and bestowing upon him the Gold Medal of the German Goethe-Institute (1955). In listing below all Dr Lodewyckx' publications, 13 in book-form and 52 articles written in 5 languages (Dutch, French, German, Icelandic and English) as a token of appreciation of this outstanding occasion, the undersigned and his colleagues in the School of Germanic Languages in the University of Melbourne wish not only to extend to their friend and colleague their most cordial wishes for the anniversary which they are



celebrating with him, but also to show a wider public what a man of learning has achieved over a span of more than half a century. This bibliography can well serve as a reminder that work in our universities need neither be dry bookwork, nor be confined to an ivory tower, but should be and is closely linked with vital problems of the community.

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by

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- 44 AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES ADrift. The Australian Quarterly, June 1947. 16 pp.
- 45 AUSTRALISCHE UNIVERSITEITEN.—De Vlaamse Gids, November 1947. 6 pp.
- 46 THE BENELUX ECONOMIC UNION—Economic Record, Melbourne, December, 1947. 11 pp.
- 47 DE BENAMINGEN VAN HET VIJFDE WERELDDEEL, HISTORISCH EN TAALKUNDIG TOEGELICHT.—Tijdschrift van het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Aardrykskundig Genootschap, Deel LXVI, No. 6, November 1949. 15 pp.
- 48 DE DUITSE WETENSCHAP—De Vlaamse Gids, Juni 1951. 7 pp.
- 49 EEN EPISODE UIT DE EERSTE POGING TOT EUROPESE KOLONISATIE IN AMERIKA. Wetenschappelijke Tijdingen, Mai 1955. 7 col. Fo.
- 50 FREYDIS EIRIKSDOTTIR ROUDA AND THE GERMANIA OF TACITUS Arkiv för nordisk filologi, Vol. LXX, 3-4. Lund (Sweden). 1955, 6 p.



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- 51 NEDERLANDS EN NEDERLANDERS IN AUSTRALIE--Wetenschappelijke Tijdingen, Februari 1956. 16 col. Fo. Also published in pamphlet form. 25 pp.
- 52 ULTIMA THULE. A paper read before the Australian Goethe Society (Victorian Branch) in 1953 to be published shortly. (An investigation into its geographical location based on the writings of ancient and medieval authors.)

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## BOOK REVIEWS

RUDYARD KIPLING, HIS LIFE AND WORK. Charles Carrington. *London, Macmillan.* 25s.

Rudyard Kipling is as difficult a subject for a biographer as he is for a literary critic. Professor Carrington may be courting disaster by the attempt to adopt both roles, but he is more than usually aware of the difficulties that beset his path. If he has not fulfilled our hopes, he has whetted our appetites; if he has not found the answers to many of our questions, he has provided the first coherent account of Kipling's life and works.

Although he was able to consult family papers, he was forced to contend with Kipling's desire for privacy and the consequent absence of material on important phases of his life. He wished to present the real and complicated Kipling, one whose public statements and activities aroused and still arouse resentment even among admirers, one whose retiring disposition concealed a shy and sensitive personality, and one whose stories and poems not only express attitudes seemingly at variance with his reputation but are stamped with the rare quality of genius.

The three most difficult questions that can be asked about Kipling are posed in the prologue,—what was his message? what sort of man was he? what was the secret of his strength? The reply to the first of these cannot be reduced to a few references to the 'Law', to 'The White Man's Burden', and to such remarks as 'It will be common people—the 3rd class carriages—that will save us'; nor to an account of his semi-public utterances, his relations with Empire-builders, and his attacks on liberals; but Professor Carrington's method is one that accepts all the contradiction and obscures none of them in order to see what emerges. The contradictions emerge and the message remains uncertain. He has made little attempt to distinguish between the inner logic of the creative work and the conclusions of the publicist. Such an attempt would be fraught with dangers and open to accusations of extra-literary prejudice; but it is curious that in this study there is a notable lack of reference to comparatively recent work on Kipling.

The method of acceptance extends to matters of more direct biographical interest. It may be refreshing that the technique of the literary psychoanalyst is not adopted, but the result is that many passages in Kipling's career remain obscure. The reader is baffled by the early separation from family and relations, by the lack of revealing material on his brief sojourn in India, by the stages through which his views on life developed, by the ambiguity of his relations with several women including the woman he married. The biographer's curiosity is kept under greater restraint than that of most readers of his book or of the many books by Kipling.

Nevertheless, in some ways the most valuable sections are concerned with the sources of Kipling's strength as an unorthodox creative writer. There are suggestive and illuminating discussions of numbers of the poems and short stories; but the very virtues of Professor Carrington's method and

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the limitations imposed on him by the inadequacy of biographical material prevent him from pursuing his investigations further and in more detail.

H.W.R.

A HISTORY OF FRENCH LITERATURE. L. Cazamian. *Oxford U.P.*, 1955, pp. xiii, 464.

A new manual of French literature, written in English by a Frenchman whose long academic career has been devoted to the study of English and American literature, is somewhat of an event. And this work will obviously be as useful a reference book to the comparatist as was Professor Cazamian's publication, with Professor Legouis, of the *History of English Literature* (1926-7). The learned author makes one general dividing line in French literature between Mediterranean and 'Northern', between Latin and Celt, between classical and romantic, and barely conceals his preference for the classical as being an 'inner rhythm of the French mind' (p. 138). Yet he remains scrupulously fair, trounces Boileau while commending Tristan and Saint-Amant, prefers Du Bellay and Chénier to Ronsard, is more than just to Leconte de Lisle, lucidly dissects Maurras and Barrès, and protests against the eclipse of Anatole France. It is interesting that, in discussing the Lyons school of poets, he equates Scève with Ronsard and Du Bellay, but does not even mention the much-publicized Jean de Sponde. So, too, he measures out sparing praise to Rimbaud, and scarcely shares the current idolatry of Mallarmé, yet forgives Valéry all his obscurities because of the 'pure gold' and 'sovereign beauty' of his poetry.

Some curious anomalies appear, due perhaps to the need for compression: Gide occupies as much space as Stendhal, Rousseau more than Racine, Madame de Staël more than Balzac. The general impression left by the book, however, is one of sanity and reflective moderation, and of a really ample perspective of the ten centuries of France's literature.

R.T.S.

HEINRICH VON KLEISTS GESAMMELTE WERKE IN VIER BAENDEN, 540 pp., 517 pp., 421 pp., 500 pp., herausgegeben und eingeleitet von Heinrich Deiters, *Aufbau Verlag, Berlin*, 1955, DM 39.00.

After Helmut Sembdner had submitted the first scholarly post-war edition of Kleist's works and letters in western Germany,<sup>1</sup> eastern Germany, the German Democratic Republic, followed suit. Kleist, one of the most controversial German writers of the golden age of German literature, descendant of a 'Junker' family, regarded in pre-Nazi times as the 'poet of Prussianism' and under the Nazi régime as the embodiment of the 'völkische Weltanschauung', has been officially recognized behind the Iron Curtain as one of the writers who are a part of the national cultural inheritance and who have a lesson to teach the present generation. Heinrich von Kleist seems to qualify for this pre-eminent position on three grounds. Firstly he was a 'patriot' who used his pen as a sword against Napoleon's dictatorship, and as the wars of liberation fought by Prussia side by side with (Tsarist) Russia are considered as a crusade for German unity, Kleist's patriotism is held up as an exemplary attitude. Secondly in many of his works Kleist expressed strong criticism of the contemporary social order; finally Kleist's compressed style which observes the minutest details has a quality of realism—in spite of the Romantic flow of his poetic diction,—which appeals to the adherents of 'social realism', the great vogue among writers behind the Iron Curtain.

These features dominate Heinrich Deiters' biographical sketch which introduces the new edition of Kleist's collected works. Deiters applies to Kleist's life and work the critical method of historical materialism. This has the effect of laying great stress upon the historical detail surrounding the life of Kleist; moreover this detail is interpreted in the Marxist manner as the beginnings of class strife between the middle class and the feudal aristocracy, and Kleist's works are interpreted less as the creations of a great artist who happens to live in an age of social ferment than as those of a writer who expressed tendentious notions and took sides with those who wished to change its social order.

The results of this method of literary criticism are less startling than one might expect. In fact a rather conventional *Kleistbild* emerges. Its main fault is that it is one-sided and that the stress is wrongly placed. Modern critical literature is completely ignored, although the findings of the 'bourgeois' philologists regarding the details of Kleist's life, the sources of his works, etc., are acknowledged. But the impression is given that the editor has stood still since 1884, when Otto Brahm's certainly meritorious and vividly written biography appeared which the editor regards as the climax of all 'bourgeois' writing on Kleist. Kleist's personality emerges from Deiters' biography in a vague and hazy light. One can only be puzzled by outworn phrases such as: 'Kleist stellte seine Poesie in den Dienst der nationalen Erhebung, wurde zu dem gleichen Zweck Journalist und nahm an der Vorbereitung der Erhebung gegen die Herrschaft Napoleons über Deutschland auch tätigen Anteil.' The real problems with which Kleist wrestled during his tragic life are not touched upon; in particular there is no mention of his utter loneliness within this 'fragile world', which is conditioned not by the state of society but by his character. Kleist's *Weltanschauung* is in no way developed, the influences that moulded it, his position within the great philosophical systems of enlightenment, classicism, idealism and romanticism are in no way clarified. The astonishing theory that Kleist, had he lived longer, might have landed in the camp of the many Romantic converts to Roman catholicism (p. 33) is quite inconsistent with the known facts.

Similarly the interpretation of Kleist's works remains very much on the surface. To interpret Kleist's comedy *Der zerbrochne Krug* as an attack on feudal justice in the Prussian countryside ('Die Rechtsprechung liegt in der Hand der Mächtigen und wird zur Unterdrückung der Bevölkerung angewandt, die Justiz ist ein Instrument der Klassenherrschaft') is truly impossible. How can the very middle-class village magistrate Adam be identified with a 'Gutsherr, der zugleich der Gerichtsherr der Bauern war', a squire who simultaneously was magistrate over his own peasants? Kleist in *Der zerbrochne Krug* has certainly expressed condemnation of unfair judicial practices, but for him it was the law as such that he wished to be upheld in all its integrity (as in many of his writings), and he had no particular social system in mind, Deiters' interpretation is shown in all its absurdity by the fact that it is the only upper-class person in the play, Judge Walter, who restores justice. Whenever Kleist wished to lash out against Junker privileges and their abuse of them, he did so explicitly, calling the Junkers by their name as in *Michael Kohlhaas*.

Deiters displays equally distorted views on Kleist's other works. His adaptation of Molière's *Amphitryon* is surely far more than an attack on 'bourgeois' forms of marriage; his tragedy *Penthesilea* is surely more than a plea for the emancipation of the woman; his masterly story *Die Marquise von O . . . .* is surely anything but the 'recognition of illegitimate motherhood which anticipates the long fight of future generations'. In the end, however, Deiters, a high official in the Ministry of Education, arrives at conclusions which deviate from orthodox Marxist views such as those of Frank Mehring and George Lukács. An anthology of Kleist's works and letters which appeared a few years ago reprinted some extracts of Lukács' essay on Kleist, in particular assertions of Kleist's hostility to social reforms and his unrepenting adherence to the way of life in 'Old



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Prussia'.<sup>2</sup> Deiters now states that Kleist was neither a *Junker*, nor a narrow nationalist nor a Romantic reactionary, but that he belonged to the 'progressive class of his time, the bourgeoisie', took up the cudgels in favour of the people, strove for social reforms, and promoted the cause of peace among the nations (his hatred of Napoleon being directed only at dictatorship but not at the French). And Deiters states expressly that his conclusions differ from those of Mehring and Lukács (which, he says, prevailed for so long), although he had taken over their critical method of historical materialism. It is interesting to notice that the application of the same method can lead investigators to conclusions so entirely different. Or do Deiters' views signify a new line in eastern literary criticism, are they the result of the post-Stalin New Course? The outcome certainly is that, in this particular aspect of Kleist's *Weltanschauung*, Herr Deiters arrived at the right conclusion, although a number of 'bourgeois' critics reached them years ago without the aid of historical materialism.

Not Herr Deiters himself, but Herr Peter Goldammer is responsible for the textual arrangement and the commentary. The first two volumes comprise, besides the introduction and the small body of lyrical poetry, Kleist's eight dramas; the third volume contains the eight stories or *Novellen* and 67 items of his incidental, mostly journalistic writings, the *Kleine Schriften*. In the last volume all Kleist's extant letters (219) and eight album entries are collected.

The poems are presented in chronological order. Kleist's first drama, *Die Familie Schroffenstein*, is given in its first printed version of 1803. Goldammer reproduces a long version of *Der zerbrochne Krug* with the 'Variant' of the first edition (1810) incorporated in the play, a bold innovation. The *Kleine Schriften* are subdivided into three groups: (1) Anecdotes, short tales and fables; (2) Political writings; (3) Writings on philosophy, fine arts and literature—a happy arrangement. The collection of letters (of which the few surviving ones addressed to Kleist are unfortunately omitted) are based on Sembdner's edition with Sembdner's new chronology duly acknowledged. Notes, conveniently printed below the page where they belong, are mostly of an explanatory nature so as to 'enable the broadest strata of the public' to read Kleist with ease. Editorial comments at the end of each of the first three volumes provide information about manuscripts, first editions, sources and important textual variants of each of the works presented. The commentary of the last volume gives a short history of the fate of Kleist's correspondence.

Goldammer's work on the text and the commentary is sound and based on solid scholarship and good knowledge of the philological problems involved, even if a few factual mistakes have occurred in the notes, and some more passages of the text could have been annotated. Except for the introduction, a useful edition of Kleist has been produced which includes a number of features that are novel and distinguish it from previous editions.

<sup>1</sup> *Heinrich von Kleist. Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*. Hanser, München, 1952, 2 vols.

<sup>2</sup> *Kleist. Ein Lesebuch für unsere Zeit* von Walter Victor, Thüringischer Volksverlag, Weimar, 1953, p. 502.

R.H.S.

THOMAS MANN. J. M. Lindsay. Oxford, Blackwell (*Modern Language Studies*), 1954. 25s.

Perhaps it is the seductively unassuming title of this work which leads to disappointment with the book itself. In its very simplicity the title is comprehensive, and this book is not. Admittedly we are warned by the author in his 'Introduction' that 'this study is an attempt to follow the development of certain frequently recurrent themes in the works of Thomas

Mann'. This Mr Lindsay does most painstakingly, but from his single-minded devotion to this task arises the shortcoming of his work.

After a 'Biographical Sketch', based rather too exclusively on Mann's own 'Lebensabriss' (1930), Mr Lindsay proceeds to trace the development of five 'central themes' in Mann's work. These chapters are excellent essays in factual research. Mr Lindsay provides a pocket-guide for the student who would like to know just those themes in Thomas Mann's work, which recur so depressingly frequently in examination questions. 'Mann and the Bürgertum' (Ch.II), 'The Artist and the Conflict' (Ch.III), 'Preoccupation with Sickness and Death' (Ch.IV) are three such 'central themes', and Mr Lindsay's detailed account of the appearance and re-appearance of these themes is so clear and well-documented, based obviously on such an intimate knowledge of Mann's work, that there is no need and not much incentive for the student to embark on the arduous process of actually reading Thomas Mann. The information is all here. But Mr Lindsay is so objective in his pursuit of these themes, that he refrains almost entirely from criticism and comment. Even in his concluding chapter he is content merely to recapitulate; value-judgments do not form part of his plan. This is all the more to be regretted since Mr Lindsay displays a very close and detailed knowledge of Mann's work. The 'Lines on some South African Novelists' come to mind:

They praise the firm restraint with which you write;  
I'm with you there of course.  
You use the snaffle and the curb all right,  
But where's the bloody horse?

Mr Lindsay deals in the same manner with the influence on Mann of Goethe, Nietzsche, Wagner and Schopenhauer, and in his account of Mann's political development has a rather British note of disapproval for the 'Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen'. He then examines the Joseph-cycle and *Doktor Faustus* individually, but we are left asking what is the compulsion behind the choice of themes so carefully traced, and what is the unity in Mann's work which these themes suggest? Had Mr Lindsay's work been in German, it might have been entitled 'Materialien zu einer Einführung in die Motivwelt Thomas Manns'. Then we would have known where we were.

E.W.H.

MODERN FRANCE. F. C. Roe. *Longmans Green & Co.*, pp. xii, 288.

The sub-title of this book, 'An Introduction to French Civilisation', indicates its scope and purpose. The attempt to analyse a complex civilisation in a relatively few pages is an ambitious one, but the author manages to carry it out with a good deal of success.

The work is divided into two sections, of which the first is devoted to a general survey of France, its people, its institutions, and the Empire which it has built up in the last century or so. Here Professor Roe discusses a number of interesting questions: the French character (where he wittily explodes one or two *idées reçues*), trends in population, Paris and its relation to the provinces, the geographical and economic situation of France, the importance of agriculture, the conservatism of the peasants, the family nature of industry, the legal and political systems, and so on. Although by no means exhaustive, this survey gives an adequate, not too highly technical picture of French life. As might be expected from an admirer of things French, Professor Roe stresses the brighter side, the sociability of the people, the attractions of Paris, the relatively balanced economy of a country able, if necessary, to feed its whole population. His partiality does not blind him, however, to at least some of the drawbacks: the hideousness of some Paris suburbs, for example, the problem of slum

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clearance, particularly in those areas inhabited by North African immigrants, and the necessity to mechanize agriculture and achieve a higher degree of industrialization generally if France is to maintain a reasonable standard of living. His account is a balanced and honest one, but at the same time forms a welcome antidote to the popular conception of a decadent France hovering on the brink of financial ruin.

The second section embraces France's contribution to the arts and sciences, and the French educational system. Here the past achievements and present trends in French education are excellently discussed, and a brief history given of five of the arts in France: Painting, Music, Drama, the Cinema, and Literature. In the last case, five representative writers are chosen as examples of French achievement in this field. The chapter on Science and inventions is particularly illuminating, and should correct a number of misapprehensions as to the capacities of the French as scientists and engineers.

The book is written sympathetically, often wittily, and gives evidence of sound knowledge and sure taste. At the end of each chapter Professor Roe has added a bibliography. The student is thus enabled to continue his exploration of the civilisation to which Professor Roe's book forms so pleasant and stimulating an introduction.

N.M.L.

ADVICE TO THE STUDENT OF FRENCH. R. C. Knight and F. W. A. George, *Blackwell*, 108 pp.

In spite of its unassuming title, this book provides a sympathetic and comprehensive introduction to University French studies. After a number of introductory remarks on the techniques of learning and the art of note taking, it explains something of the aims and methods of the lecturer, both in giving a course of lectures, and when conducting tutorials; stressing by implication how much is left to the student's individual effort. It then proceeds to explain how that effort may be best directed. Each branch of French studies is treated in turn, under three heads: the study of language, the study of literature, and the study of 'civilisation'. The last includes, very sensibly, some advice on going abroad. In each section the authors discuss the best methods of approaching the various disciplines,—prose, 'explication', dissertation, the historical study of the language, 'set books', literature proper, and so on, indicating the most useful reference books in each case. Much of what they have to say will appear self-evident to those with experience in University teaching, but as the preface points out, some students in the past have found it unfamiliar enough to be useful. The standards set by the authors are no doubt extremely high, and their counsels are perhaps counsels of perfection, but this should have the effect of putting good students on their mettle. Primarily designed for the student setting out on the 'single honours' course, this book should nevertheless prove useful to anyone intending to study French to an advanced level.

N.M.L.

L'ENFANT ET LA RIVIERE. Henri Bosco (ed. E. D. James). *London, Harrap*, pp. 20, 128. LA NEIGE EN DEUIL. Henri Troyat (ed. W. D. Howarth), *London, Harrap*, pp. 15, 143. LE NOTAIRE DU HAVRE. G. Duhamel (ed. Brett-James and Shackleton), *London, Harrap*, pp. 43, 230. LA SYMPHONIE PASTORALE. A. Gide (ed. Shackleton), *London, Harrap*, pp. xxxv, 88. PREMIER DE CORDEE. R. Frison-Roche (ed. P. E. Thompson), *London, Harrap*, pp. 11, 203.

These texts, primarily intended for Sixth Forms in England, are quite well adapted to first-year work at the University, whether for rapid reading or for *explication*, and are provided with critical introductory material pro-



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portionate to the length of the text presented. The introductions are a good feature of this series of texts: in addition to biographical detail about the author there is sober analysis of plot and character, and especially in the two longer works (Duhamel and Gide) a sound critical appraisal of the style and purpose of the writers, along with an attempt to 'place' the particular text in the general perspective of their life work. There is no vocabulary appended, but fairly full and adequate explanatory notes.

L'ECOLE DES FEMMES. Molière (ed. A. Nockels), London, Macmillan, pp. xxxvi, 102. BAJAZET. J. Racine (ed. C. Girdlestone). Oxford, Blackwell, pp. xix, 83.

Prepared for Sixth Form readers, this Molière play embodies in its introductions the more recent interpretations of Molière associated with Professor Bray and Dr W. G. Moore, and its account of contemporary conditions and of contemporary theatre is pleasant and comprehensive, while a brief analysis of the comic elements in the play is reinforced by vigorous explanatory notes.

Professor Girdlestone's *Bajazet*, based on the text of the 1697 edition, is a useful addition to the Blackwell's French Texts series. Very full notes are given, and a critical introduction which not only raises questions but also answers them. Discussion of the possible sources of the play is followed by sections on the structure, characters, form and nature of the tragedy, and a bibliography for the guidance of students. The subsection on the nature of the tragedy (pp. xiv ff.) is fairly brief and not beyond dispute, but the edition as a whole is excellent for undergraduate purposes.

R.T.S.

OUTLINE OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE, from Dante Alighieri to Eugene O'Neill by Werner P. Friederich, with the collaboration of David Henry Maloney. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1954.

This substantial volume of 451 pages has an excellent index of names of authors, but no table of contents. The scheme of the work proves to be chronological. After 30-odd pages devoted to a cursory survey of the main literary themes of Antiquity, Christianity and the Middle Ages, the authors head their first section *Renaissance* and then proceed on the same pattern through *Baroque*, *Classicism* and *Enlightenment*, *Pre-Romanticism* and *Romanticism* up to *Realism* and *Symbolism*. The latter term, as they explain, has to cover several more literary-isms as well as *neue Sachlichkeit*. With majestic sweep the work covers the whole of European literature (with Russia and Scandinavia as comparative late-comers) and brings in American literature as well. (Antipodeans will note that Katherine Mansfield and Sherwood Anderson are bracketed together as 'two of the greatest modern Anglo-American short story writers').

The reader of experience will find mentioned not only all the traditional literary relationships (though perhaps *Othello* and *Zaire* should have been dropped), but also many less well-known, like Rimbaud and Hart Crane, or Yvette and Washington Irving. In this field the authors' knowledge is encyclopaedic. The chief value of the book will in fact be as an encyclopaedia of the facts of comparative literature, without too much emphasis on the functional details of emitters, receivers and intermediaries.

In such a work one may question at least in part such a compressed judgement, as for example whether the French 17th century is 'more dignified yet less colourfully romantic than the age of Elizabeth, less overflowing wealthy above all than the golden age of the Germany of Goethe, Kant and Beethoven'; or admire the courage of attempting a definition of Baroque as concise as this: 'a last flickering up of the spirit of the Middle Ages in the futile attempt to show the tide of modern godlessness that had started with the Renaissance.'

As the authors frankly admit, this is not an *Introduction* to comparative

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literature. Its scope is too comprehensive, its erudition too vast, its spirit too mature. (For this very reason is it necessary constantly to translate titles like *El libro defuen humor*, *De claris mulieribus* and dozens more? Those of us who had the great privilege of hearing Professor Friederich lecture during his visit to Melbourne in 1955 will recognize with renewed pleasure the same masterly handling of a disarmingly vast subject by a world authority.

A.C.K.

L'UNIVERS POETIQUE DE BAUDELAIRE. Austin, Lloyd J. *Paris, Mercure de France*, 1956. 354 pp.

Baudelaire has come back into the limelight in the past few years; but this limelight has been inadequately focussed in more than one case. That makes it a real pleasure to read Dr Austin's book, in which the focussing is meticulous and the judgments are penetrating. It is a pleasure also to see how the author, a graduate of Melbourne who is now a fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, goes deep into the text—a method of criticism that should be taken for granted but which is far too seldom used.

At the same time, he examines the existing literature on Baudelaire with lucid thoroughness, and brings out with admirable objectivity the merits and defects of his predecessors in the Baudelairean field. In doing this, he naturally examines the bases of Symbolism; and in fact, as we gather from an announcement at the beginning of his book, this is the first volume of a trilogy, the second and third parts of which will be devoted to Mallarmé and Valéry respectively.

The general thesis of this first volume (which bears the subtitle: 'Symbolisme et Symbolique') is that Baudelaire proceeds from a general symbolism, which Dr Austin calls 'Symbolique divine', and which takes us back to the middle ages, towards a Satanism which results inevitably from his frustrations in the domain of the older 'symbolique'. Thence he moves on to a 'Symbolisme humain', and thus prepares the way, I assume, for that secularisation of the spiritual which we find in its intermediate form in Mallarmé, and which in Valéry rejoins the non-Pascalian *Cogito* of Descartes.

To put it in another way: I am inclined to think that the line Baudelaire-Mallarmé-Valéry runs from metaphysics to psychology—not the Freudian variety of psychology, of course, but the sort that seeks an explanation and a tentative justification of life in the lucid consciousness of man. As Valéry puts it in the closing stanza of *La Pythie*:

Honneur des Hommes, Saint LANGUAGE,  
Discours prophétique et paré,  
Belles chaînes en qui s'engage  
Le dieu dans la chair égaré,  
Illumination, largesse!

Dr Austin does not say explicitly that this is his ultimate orientation; but he exemplifies it implicitly in the second part of his book, where he examines minutely the relationship, in Baudelaire, between language and the multiple data of the senses. This second part is a splendid piece of literary research; the work of a craftsman investigating craftsmanship; and is thus invaluable to students of poetry, who cannot go far in the right direction until they realise that poetry, as Mallarmé said, is *written with words*, and that one of the chief criteria for the judgment of a poet's work is, therefore, his mastery of his verbal medium.

In this respect I find only one major deficiency in this satisfying book. I should have liked to see a closer examination of the relations between thought and texture in Baudelaire's work; or, to use a favourite term of Chris Brennan's, a more detailed study of inner form. To some extent, Dr Austin compensates for this by an excellent chapter on Baudelaire's

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imagination. But perhaps he might have gone further and looked for the source and nature of that inner magic which defies analysis but is nevertheless the most subtle and satisfying element in our appreciation of poetry.

For example, I think that Baudelaire, despite some *échecs* and shortcomings, went a long way towards renewing and revaluing, by means of inner form, the *music* of poetry (a matter of much greater importance, really, than Symbolist 'musicalisation'). I have an impression that he tried to introduce *music in depth* into his stanzas; a kind of harmony, as it were, in place of the mere linear melody of verse. It is true that Hugo did this on his usual titanic scale, but he did it *unconsciously*; whereas Baudelaire was deliberately trying to find the *rationale* of stanza harmony. Perhaps you will say that Hugo's unconscious method was the mark of a greater poet, nor would I altogether disagree. But the important point, for the inner history of poetry, is that if Baudelaire's method was conscious, intentional, then he was in a special and highly significant way a forerunner of Valéry, who insists on the allocation of the major role in poetry to the carefully organised sensibility of the intellect.

However, I am giving too much space to views of my own; and it would be both egotistical and unfair to take Dr Austin to task for not having these particular views—or at any rate, not expressing them. Moreover, there is so much excellent matter in his book that it would be unreasonable to clamour for more.

And then, who knows? Perhaps this is a question that he can handle more appositely when he comes to his third volume and applies his penetrating method of investigation to the work of Valéry.

A.R.C.

LANGUAGE, A MODERN SYNTHESIS. Joshua Whatmough. London, Secker & Warburg. 1956. viii, 270 pp.

One of the most noticeable features in linguistic theory since the war has been the development of a deliberately mechanist approach to language among linguists in the U.S.A. This development began before the war, specifically with Bloomfield's application to linguistics of the principles of behaviourist psychology, but it is also the outcome of difficulties inherent in the study of little or unknown languages. The consequent elimination of meaning as a criterion in the analysis of linguistic structure led, among other things, to the development of mathematical techniques for describing the distribution of structural elements and their capacity for association and for substitution one for another.

In Europe, on the other hand, the predominant feature of linguistic structure has been considered to be the solidarity of mutually-conditioned elements. The stress has been on the dynamic rather than the mechanical. Of recent years, exchange of opinion<sup>1</sup> has begun to break down in some degree the apparently rigid barrier between the two approaches, and European linguists in particular have begun using statistical methods which have been mainly, but not entirely, evolved in the U.S.A.<sup>2</sup> The European condemnation of distribution schemes, as not giving a correct notion of structure,<sup>3</sup> has, however, not been generally accepted by American linguists.

Although it is not his stated purpose, Professor Whatmough, a comparative philologist of considerable eminence, is well qualified to attempt a synthesis of the opposing viewpoints, and has in fact gone some way towards achieving this. One of the basic themes of his book is precisely the impossibility of studying linguistic structure while excluding meaning (p. 14, 145, 193, etc.), and the warning is clearly repeated that a mechanist theory of language cannot avoid solipsism (pp. 14, 226). The extent to which such a reaffirmation is necessary in the U.S.A. may be measured by the fact that the author, in a book destined for a wide public and in which therefore references to specific works are very rare, is obliged to give a reference in justification of his use of the word *mental* in the sen-



tence: 'Language has to do not solely with external events, experience and behaviour, but also with understanding, intellection, "mental" events' (p. 230).

The relationship between language and reality therefore takes on some importance in the book. Language is an activity of man, and therefore 'in some sense its structure corresponds to the structure of man's life and world, particularly in the manner in which it holds time and space within itself, differently as different languages conceive these forms, each language being a sort of duplicate partial world contained within itself' (p. 228-9). Meaning is 'activity or expression directed to a goal,' something by which man 'may both interpret and modify his environment' (p. 67). Therefore 'it is not possible for linguists to hand over phonetics to physics and meaning to sociology, as some have proposed, without making structural linguistics utterly sterile' (p. 145).

The principle underlying the descriptive method used by the author is that language is systematically based on principles of contrast, order, choice and regularity, the functioning of which can be expressed in terms of statistical analysis along lines already worked out by experts in telegraphy, etc. (see footnote <sup>2</sup>). Theoretically, the approach as explained seems sound enough, but the results of some of its applications to specific languages have been disturbing. J. Cantineau, for example, has shown<sup>4</sup> the errors of Z. Harris in imposing a system on Hebrew. An example from the book under review is also perhaps significant. The explanation given of the change from *caput* to *testa*, whence Fr. *tête* (p. 71, 77-79, 82), relies on (1) the low frequency of occurrence and high semantic content of *testa*, as against the high frequency of use, and commonplace semantic content of *caput* (structural reasons), and (2) the use of skulls as drinking-cups (extralinguistic reasons) which led to the association of 'skull' and 'pot'. Now the recent study of Prof. E. Benveniste<sup>5</sup> has shown that it was not so much frequency as *extension*<sup>6</sup> of use which killed *caput*, and that the semantic link between the two words was the sense '(hard)shell', rather than 'pot'; and he inclined to the view that *testa* was used for 'skull' by medical men long before we have trace of such a meaning. This suggests not only that the low frequency—higher content opposition is an oversimplification, but that the statistical approach makes it easier to avoid the detailed study of speech samples and social context which are a prerequisite of historical semantics. It is perhaps significant that *langues spéciales* and linguistic geography are not mentioned in this book.

Apart, however, from faults of this kind, which may not be due to anything inherent in the basic approach, the problem still remains whether the qualitative differences among linguistic elements can be fully described by quantitative methods. Prof. Whatmough has some illuminating comments to make on the nature of the poetic use of language (see esp., p. 104-7), but it is doubtful whether he would claim that poetic discourse differs solely by its quantitative departures from the prevailing norm.

His own contribution to the theory of linguistic change—the principle of selective variation—is an expression in statistical terms of the older notion of language striking a balance between stability and mobility. Unchecked variation would lead to unintelligibility; therefore selection operates to maintain communicability. In his first presentation of this principle<sup>7</sup> Professor Whatmough stated that the outcome of the process 'is in large measure determined by the operation of nonlinguistic causes', but the mode of this determination has still not received adequate attention.

This is a closely-packed and thought-provoking book, in which the traditional narrow bounds of structural linguistics are broken down in welcome and decisive fashion. Many important aspects cannot be discussed here, but the attention of language teachers should be drawn to the wise remarks on p. 23-25, and the comments on the distinction set up between the natural and the social sciences (Appendix 10) also deserve close study.

K.J.H.

## Books Received

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See in particular E. Benveniste, *Tendances récentes en linguistique générale*, in *Journal de psychologie* 47(1954) 130-145.

<sup>2</sup> The modern pioneer was actually G. U. Yule, *The Statistical Analysis of Literary Vocabulary* (Cambridge, 1944), and work in this field was greatly developed by the American G. K. Zipf. Of predominant importance now, however, are the theories developed by American communications engineers, particularly C. E. Shannon and W. Weaver, *Mathematical theory of communication*, Urbana 1949.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, J. Cantineau's review in *Bulletin de la société de linguistique de Paris* (hereafter *BSLP*), t.50(1954) 4-9, of Z. S. Harris, *Methods in Structural Linguistics*.

<sup>4</sup> See note 3, and also *BSLP* 46(1950), f.1, p. 100-102. P. Guiraud's *Caractères statistiques du vocabulaire* (Paris 1949), and the reviews in *BSLP* 45(1954) by mathematician B. Mandelbrot (p. 16-21) and linguist G. Gougenheim (p. 21-24) are also pertinent.

<sup>5</sup> *Problèmes sémantiques de la reconstruction*, in *Word* 10(1954); see, on *caput-testa*, p. 255-256.

<sup>6</sup> 'On constate que *caput* ne signifie pas seulement 'tête', mais aussi 'personne', et aussi 'capital(financier)' et aussi 'capitale (d'une province)'; il entre dans des liaisons telles que *caput amnis* . . . , *caput coniurationis* . . . , *caput cenae* . . . , *caput libri* . . . , *caput est ut* . . . , etc. Le nombre et l'étendue de ces variantes affaiblissaient la spécificité de *caput* "tête" (Benveniste, p. 255).

<sup>7</sup> *Actes du 6e Congrès international des linguistes* (Paris 1949), p. 347-348.

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